

The HILLS O' CA'LINY



A.W. SPALDING



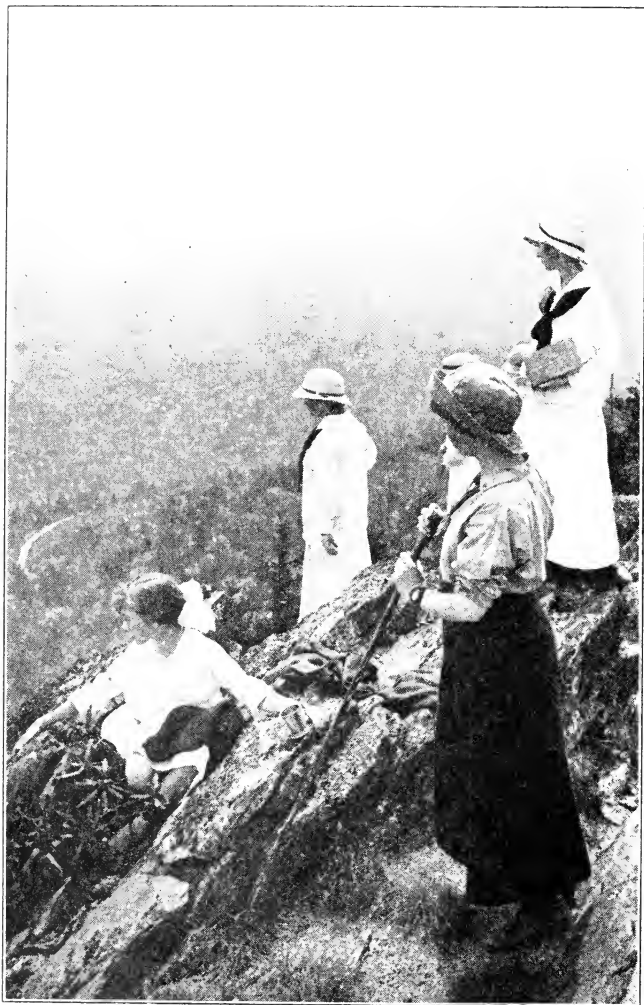
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Book 1

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The Hills o' Ca'liny



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Looking Down from Mt. Mitchell

THE HILLS O' CA'LINY

By
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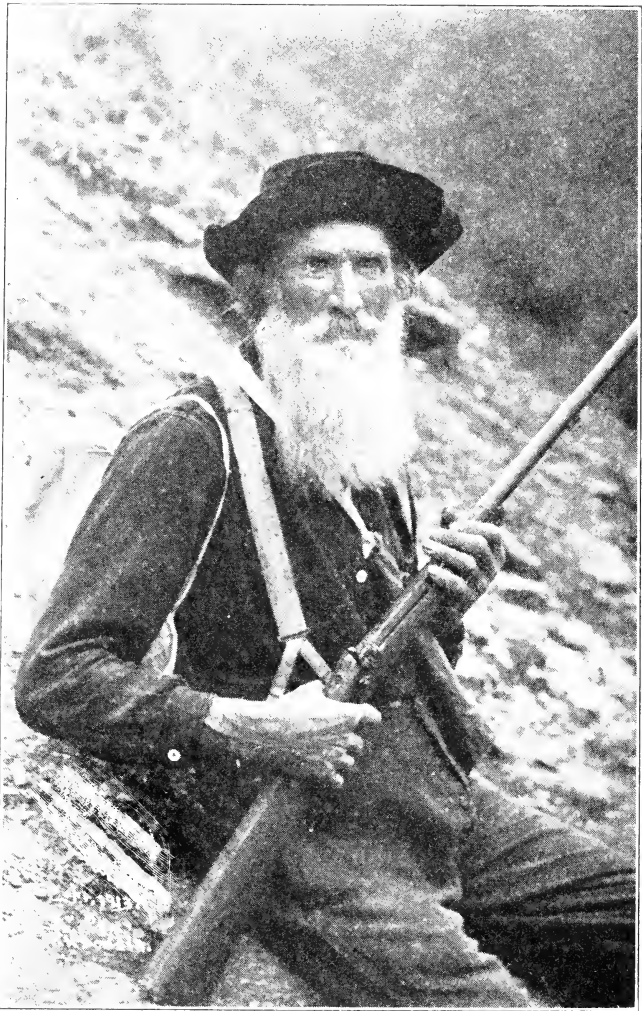
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Old Man Douglas

"A brave old man, though a garrulous, and a good old man withal."

Among Mine Own People

“ No, brother, I reckon I ain’t a travelin’ out West jist yit. The’s heaps o’ young fellers as thinks they kin make ther fortin out thar, an’ hit may be they kin; but from all I hear tell, the’s mighty little human kindness amongst ’em-all out thar, — jist a-pushin’ an’ a-crowdin’ ter make ther own way. I was borned seventy-six year ago in the big log house down yander, an’ my ol’ woman was borned jist over the gap. We was raised up here, an’ I reckon we-all ’ull stay in these hills o’ Ca’liny till they opens up to take in the ol’ bones. We-all air like the woman o’ Scriptur, y’ ricollict: we dwell amongst our own people.”

The first trace I came upon of Old Man Douglas was a home-printed sign that

faced me at the turning of a lane, a sign of quaint character and quaint phrase:

“ NOTIS

“ All Persons are hereby notified not to trespass on or thru this Land at nite with Dogs or guns or otherwise atween the hours of Sun Set and Sun Rise at ther own Risk by the Strenth of My Arms and the Contence of a Dubble Barrel Shot Gun.

“ This the 1 Day of Sept 1909.

“ J. B. DOUGLAS.”

The vision of a tall, raw-boned, steely-eyed mountaineer came up before me. I did not trespass. Though it was not between the hours of sunset and sunrise, and though I had neither dog nor gun, yet possibly the broad legislative mind which framed that law might hold I had “ otherwise;” and being on a peaceable errand, I would not invite war. A little farther on, I found a driveway that led up to the old man’s house, and so I came upon him — a surprise. Gaunt indeed he was, but

shorter than I, who am no Goliath; and his deep blue eyes, which age could not yet fade, were as kindly as my mother's. Yet I could see through their twinkling the gleaming of a fire that would not uniformly remain hidden, and it took no great stretch of imagination to be looking along a blue barrel into eyes gone steely gray.

Much of the lore of the mountain country had he at his tongue's end: how the road that ran by his house was the oldest in the country, being made along the old Indian trail from Hickorynut Gap in the Blue Ridge, down to the canoe path of the French Broad; how the old log house in which he was born (now clapboarded and called a hotel), was one of the four this side the Ridge that stood for civilization a hundred years ago; and many a tale, had I had time to hear, of war and revenue, bushwhacking and moonshining.)

And, like almost all his kind, he was comparatively well versed in Scripture.

He was the first of many I have found through these mountains whose wisdom in gospel and prophecy exceeds that of many of their ministers.

The ministry, indeed, is in a curious state. Too few to reach all the widely scattered settlements, not to speak of the lonely cabins, the ministers have divided as much as they can compass into circuits from ten to a hundred miles in length, along which the itinerant preacher rides, reaching each station perhaps once a month. This system of circuit-riding, originating in Methodism and copied by others under the same conditions, is familiar enough to us in the early history of the Middle West, and it yet survives in the mountains. But the country preachers now are largely young men, just out from the little mountain sectarian "college" (another survival), or else graduates of larger theological schools, passing here a novitiate before succeeding to higher positions. Thus they

make a mixture of smatterers and students, with differing faiths of dogmatism and radicalism, a state confusing to the keen though unsophisticated mind of the mountaineer, who at once reveres the higher learning and rebels against the liberalism of many of his spiritual advisers.

More popular with him is the scarcer type of preacher, largely self-taught, who has diligently thumbed his Bible, vaguely groping with untutored Anglo-Celtic apprehension in the jurisprudence and the imagery of the Oriental. "Old Pap Somers," he may be, or "Preacher James;" and though, jealous of his prerogatives, he may have "Rev." stenciled on his rural mail box for the awing of chance visitors, yet among his own people he must be content with the more familiar, and indeed the more endearing, sobriquet.

But apart from the professed preachers are the old men who, shut up to the Bible library, have made themselves familiar

with its pages, who love to argue and to exhort, and who often therefrom feel their Celtic blood stirring them to fill the prophetic office, and from dreams and symbolic visions predict impossible futures.

Of such was my friend Old Man Douglas, he of the flowing white whiskers and the mild, dangerous blue eyes. Surer and truer, indeed, was he upon the revelation of the Apocalypse than many a spry young sprig of the pulpit; and the wonders of the day, of which he had heard through his weekly newspaper or the widespread gossip of the cabins and the crossroads store — these spelled to him, as they must to the broader mind, the coming dissolution of the world.

But “other-worldliness” was not a vice with him. Though ever ready to converse upon religion, he was, it appeared as I met him now and then afterward, a master hand at giving advice to neighbors. And he had a lively interest in affairs great and

small. As his "Notis" might indicate, he had had plenty of experience with dog and gun, and in his memory carried triumphant trophies of foot race and wrestling bout.

"Doc Williams," said he one day, out on the road, talking to me and a waylaid mule driver, "Doc Williams an' me growed up together in these parts. He's two years younger'n me, but city life sho' does tell on anybody. I seed him up at Asheville yesterday was a week ago, an' says I, 'Come on now, Doc, an' I'll wrassle ye, right here on the grass.' An' d'ye think he would? Nary bit. He knowed I could down him yit, if my old bones air over the threescore-an'-ten-year line.") And his rosy face, framed in white from forehead to chin, glowed around the smile his surviving prowess begot. A brave old man, though a garrulous, and a good old man withal, with his well-thumbed Bible and his kindly eye and his human smile, with the "Strengthen"

of his good right "Arm" and the "Contentence of a Dubble Barrel Shot Gun."

"Among mine own people" — the phrase stays with me, and I find myself echoing the sentiment as I trudge the stony roads, as I enter the mansion, the farmhouse, and the cabin alike, as I answer the hearty farewell of an acquaintance of half an hour, "Good-by, brother!" For everywhere it is "brother." The distant "stranger" of the West, the "neighbor" of the garrulous Yankee, even the "friend" of the Quaker, are stricken to shame before the kindliness of the mountain salutation, "Good-by, brother. Wish you mighty luck."

And something there is that gives the feeling of kin. Who, indeed, would not be proud of the kindred of the American mountaineer? Kin he is, indeed, to all of English America. Pure stock of the British Isles, Saxon and Celt, he has fed the streams of Western emigration from be-

fore the times of the Revolution. Through these mountains, and from them, poured the stream that peopled Tennessee and Kentucky, surged sidewise north of the Ohio and south into Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, found a vent through Missouri, and later infused its blood into the wide West, and fastened there many of its customs and habits of thought.

Indeed, there is nothing greatly to distinguish the mountaineer from other peoples, except the effects of his accidental environment. And this environment differs from the common lot, in any appreciable degree, only as we get back from the railroads and centers of trade and culture. Come into the mountain country, enter the cities, go out upon the farms in the fertile valleys: you have all about you the same stock that peopled the mountains; you are among the mountaineers. But you find them a familiar type; they are simply the English Americans you find every-

where, East, North, and West. Go anywhere, indeed, among the mountains where education, business, and culture have found a place, and unless you are a romanticist or a critic, determined to seek peculiarities through microscopic eyes, you will not find yourself in strange conditions or among curious people. Your neighbor may have certain little habits and ways of doing things which are odd to you, but so, for that matter, are your ways odd to him. There is no standard of social forms except that of the majority, and being in the minority, you, and not your neighbor, are by all rights the proper subject for museum honors.

It is well, then, to remember that the mountaineer is divided into classes which do not permit the same generalizations. The big-valley dweller and the city dweller are the typical prosperous English-Americans; the little valleys and the hills hold a class whose opportunities may not have

permitted for them such thorough intercourse and acquaintance with the world, but yet who fully equal the average rural population of many Northern States; beyond these is a third class, in isolated coves, on high table-lands difficult of access, or out upon the mountains (and, for that matter, in many sections of the piedmont and the lowlands), who are almost completely cut off from the world's progress.

It is this latter type, chiefly, that has become familiar to the reading public as "the mountaineer." If he could be set apart by language, or religion, or decided peculiarities of custom, from his brethren of the valleys, and provided with a name which would clearly differentiate him, he might be written about with no offense to those more fortunate ones who still are accorded with him the proud title of "mountaineer." But the fact is, there is no such distinct line. The three classes I have suggested might as well be a hundred; for the

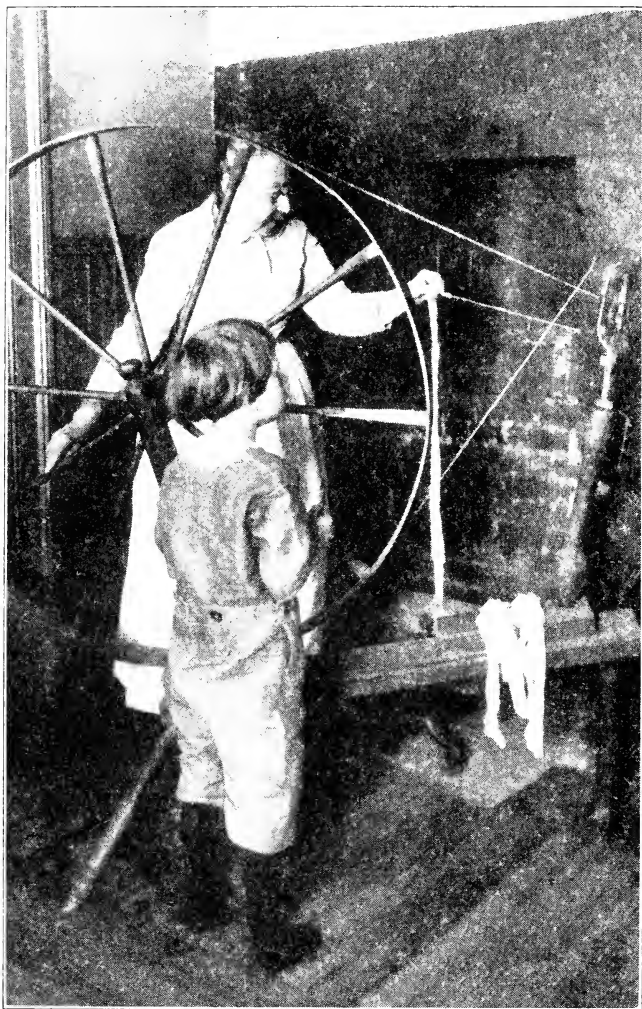


Photo by Eugene J. Hall

The Old Spinning Wheel

differences are finely graded, and interrelations of blood and life are so close that a President of the United States — like Abraham Lincoln — may own his cousins by the score back on Hominy Creek.

It is the isolated and uneducated mountaineer that has made the most picturesque figure in literature, chiefly because he represents ideals and limitations of thought which we left — whether to our profit or our loss — with our great-grandfathers. But even with him, I am not so sure of my superiority in knowledge or in ethics. I may have absorbed more of popular science than he, but science, unsupported, is only the conclusions of certain men, and he may choose his own standard of learning rather than theirs. Science tells me many things which, to take its own principle, I myself reserve the right to doubt. I do not believe this earth was one hundred million years in the making, because my Bible tells me God made it in six days. For this the evo-

lutionist counts me a funny ignoramus; but I only laugh in my sleeve at him, being certain that another hundred years, were the world to stand that long, would make his present conceited ignorance the laughingstock. But then what right have I to deride my neighbor Andrews, who grows wrathful when his children in school are taught that the world is round and revolving? — for Joshua told the sun to stand still! To be sure, I can demonstrate to my own satisfaction the follies of evolution, and find abundant harmony between the literal statements of the Bible and rational science. But so also can Brother Andrews prove to his own satisfaction — and evident pleasure — that “the sun do move.” Perhaps it does.

I think it best for me to be duly humble before the opinions of other men, unless I can give them the Word of God for corrective truth. And then, I find it so much more comfortable and interesting to go

about listening, without having either to combat or ridicule. I was talking with Uncle Peter Carroll one day about "the great earthquake" — the Charleston earthquake — which shook these mountains. He described vividly his experience and sensations that night, and then touched upon the effects of the earthquake.

("Hit used to be a heap colder," he asserted. "I ricollict we uster drive acrost the creeks with wagons the hull winter through, an' the snow piled up jist this-away" (with a swift upward movement of the hands), "but we don't have no sich winters now. No, suh. The great uthquake done hit. Now I don't know nothin' about hit; I hain't no eddication in sich things; but there be fellers — astronomers, they call 'em — thet says thet uthquake moved this hull country a hundred miles south. Yes, suh!")

"I never heard of such a thing." I meekly said.

“ Well, I don’t know,” he replied, “ I ain’t no astronomer; but I do know hit’s a heap warmer. We uster have sleighin’ the hull winter through, an’ we uster have ice, but we don’t no more, fer more’n a day or two. An’ the land’s mighty po’ now, too. Hit uster be mighty good. Cropped too much? No, suh, thet ain’t hit. New land jist like the old. An’ the peaches don’t hit no more, because hit thaws up an’ then hit freezes, an’ hit thaws an’ freezes, an’ freezes ’em out. An’ the’ ain’t much else thet hits, nuther.”

So he piled the evidence up, until it began indeed to appear that in this startlingly scientific assertion the astronomers must be right. And what was I before the astronomers! I put Uncle Peter Carroll beside Old Man Douglas, as one I should like to have for my forebear.

Yes, something there is that makes the call of kin come reaching through with its soft fingers to touch the heartstrings till

they echo to the words, "He hath made of one blood." There is in the average mountaineer a reserve united with an openness that compels you to say, "Here is a man that might be a friend." His home is open to you, though it be but a one-room cabin; his board has a place for the stranger, "ef you-all kin eq'al our fare;" and if you throw aside your reserve and make yourself one in the firelit circle, you will find him a good listener, and often a good talker, while still you feel there lie depths beyond your present probing.

These mountaineers of the far hills have well been called "our contemporary ancestors;" for some phase of every epoch of the past two centuries may be found in their lives. Here is the windowless log cabin of the first pioneer, with the ax that hewed it out and the gun that defends it; yonder is the ox team of the second generation, with even the rough cart whose two wheels were sawed from a huge log; and, stretching in

trains from the metropolis for fifty miles along the pikes and paths, are seen the white-topped "prairie schooners." The spinning wheel and the loom are still busy in the cabins, and the majority of housewives still swing their pork and beans to cook over the rude kitchen fireplace, and set the corn bread to bake in the "baking kettle" buried in coals upon the hearth. The habits of life and thought are largely those of a century ago; and the speech is enriched, not marred, with many an expression which, uncouth to our modern ears, would have been power and elegance to our fathers of three hundred years ago.

And when I think of the history of this people, of the dauntless pioneering, of the heroic daring and suffering in civil war, of deeds of generous chivalry and of black revenge — a people striving with little help to feel and hold the high ideals of the noble race from which they sprung, I am glad that my feet have come to tread the rocky

roads and the dim trails that lie between the lonely cabins and the settlements; and, in the thought of service, I am content to say, though king may call to court, or priest to benefice, “ I dwell among mine own people.”

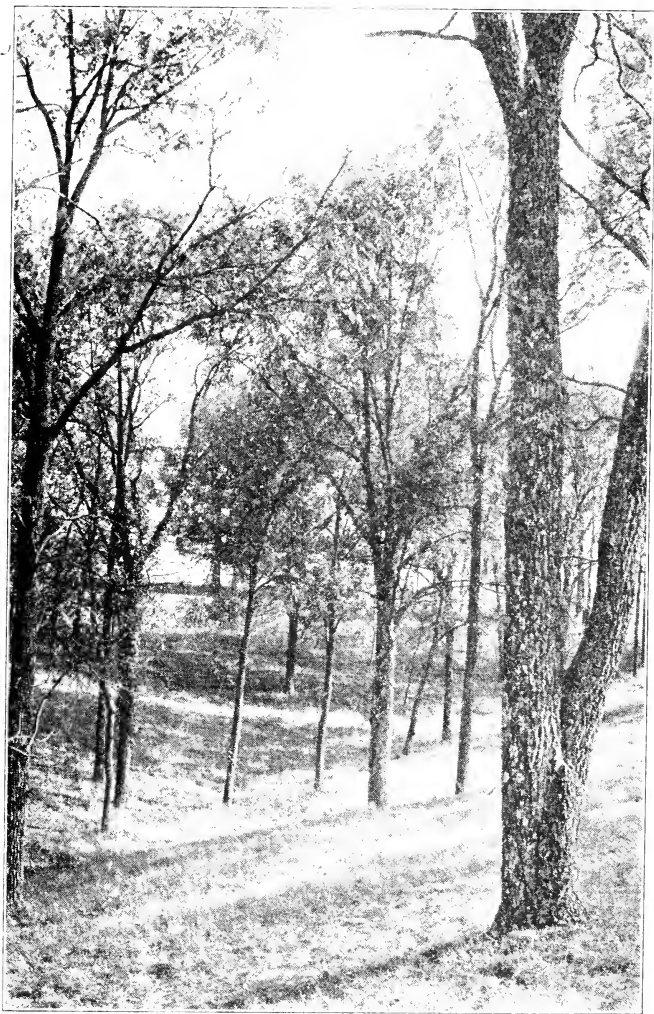


Photo by Eugene J. Hall

Autumn

“The trees, released from the summer’s campaign, were hastening to doff their uniforms of green.”

The Land of the Sky

THOSE beautiful October days when I trudged the winding roads and climbed the steep ascents to carry the Book to villa and to hovel, — ah, how they troop along my glad memory with their delightful warmth and haze and color! The woods in their colors, in places how gorgeous; in broad landscapes how restful to the eye! The trees, released from their summer's campaign, were hastening to doff their uniforms of green, and to trick themselves out in all the brightness of civilian dress, as suited each fancy. Hastiest of all, the sourwood appeared in vivid red, then the aristocratic poplars in their yellow green; the sturdy hickories followed with a brighter yellow, and the maples came hard after with all their mingled colors. And

lastly the oaks, as though reluctant to part company with their comrades, the pines, slowly splashed themselves with color, all shades of red and brown dashing themselves upon the green. The mountain side glowed at last in brightness, like a great picture hung by the Creator against the sky. Slowly it faded as the days went on; but in memory it lives still.

But the sky! The sky can never be forgotten. Long ago this country was christened by a writer who had caught some of its glory, "The Land of the Sky." And surely, if anywhere, then here, may be heeded Ruskin's words: "The sky is for all. Bright as it is, it is not too bright nor good for human nature's daily food; it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart, for soothing it and purifying it from its dross and dust."

Blue as with the dust of the amethysts of heaven, the great dome, when clear, is

our purest earnest of the coming kingdom. There is nothing that so carries the soul away as to lie upon the back and gaze far, far, and farther into the depths of the blue sky. The great expanse seems to deepen, to open before the eye like the sea at Pihahiroth before the sweeping wind of God; the imagination is carried away with the vast infinitude of space; we seem to be already winging our flight of eternity to uncounted worlds. A keen delight steals over the soul, a delight incomparable, in my mind, with any other sensation than that sense of God's nearness when through Jesus He forgives our sins.

Then over the mountains there climb up great masses of billowy white clouds. What is there in white masses that so attracts the artist within us? When I was a boy, the thick, up-piled soapsuds in the washtub had a fascination for me; and I used to gaze longingly at the pictures in the geography of heaps of white cotton with grinning

black pickaninnies sporting about in it. A flock of sheep on a green hillside holds our eyes longer than a mottled herd. The sea is never so glorious as when the green billows are capped with white crests. And the death of winter is sanctified, beautified, by the mantle of snow that drapes itself over the ugliness of naked nature.

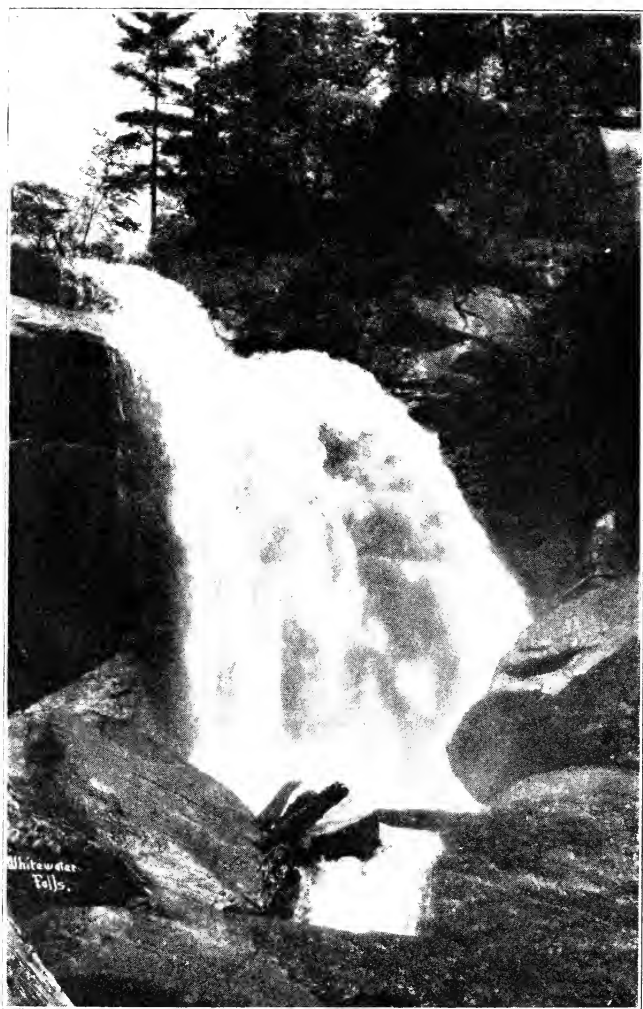
But when the eye leaps from earth to sky, to behold the clouds, it is as looking from beauty to glory. One finds himself involuntarily wondering, as the thunderheads roll up, how on such slender bases the great domes can be reared. They gather; they roll; they multiply; they change from a hundred formations to a thousand; they lose their whiteness; they darken; they blacken; they mutter and thunder; and the storm bursts over the land.

But what serene, sweet mornings, with the sprinkled cirrus coaxing away the blackness of night from the face of the sky!

How the light cloud wisps are touched into rose with the early beams of the sun from behind the mountains! How the colors mingle as the age-old miracle is worked by the climbing sovereign — purple and white, rose and gold; pedestal and pinnacle glowing and fading, until the heart goes out in the prayer:

“Clothe me in the rose tints of Thy skies,
Upon morning summits laid,
Robe me in the purple and gold that flies
Through Thy shuttles of light and shade.”

It is not the heavens alone that seem to make appropriate the title, “The Land of the Sky.” These pastured hills, these forest-covered mountains, are, it seems to me, more like the mountains of heaven than any others earth affords. No jagged, precipitous cliffs are they, but rounded, gently swelling slopes. True, in some places they become steep, and here and there reveal an outcropping ledge, but there is not much of this.



A Waterfall in "Ca'liny "

" It is a land of springs, of flowing waters."

Stand with me on the pinnacle of Couch Mountain, just behind our home. We have climbed twelve hundred feet to reach it; and now there spreads out below us the great French Broad Valley, with its tributaries, bounded by great ranges of mountains famous in legend and story: the Blue Ridge, the Pisgah range, the Swannanoas, and the Big Craggies; far to the right, mighty Mt. Mitchell; and in the distant southwest, behind the Nantahalas, the sky line of the Great Smoky Mountains. And scarce a cliff to be seen, but instead, the graceful, rounded outlines of the hills of the Land of the Sky. Forest, pasture, and field succeed one another, with here and there a glimpse of blue water. The words of the sixty-fifth psalm come to mind:

“ The pastures are clothed with flocks;
The valleys also are covered over with corn;
They shout for joy, they also sing.”

Do you remember the Delectable Mountains, where the pilgrims refreshed them-

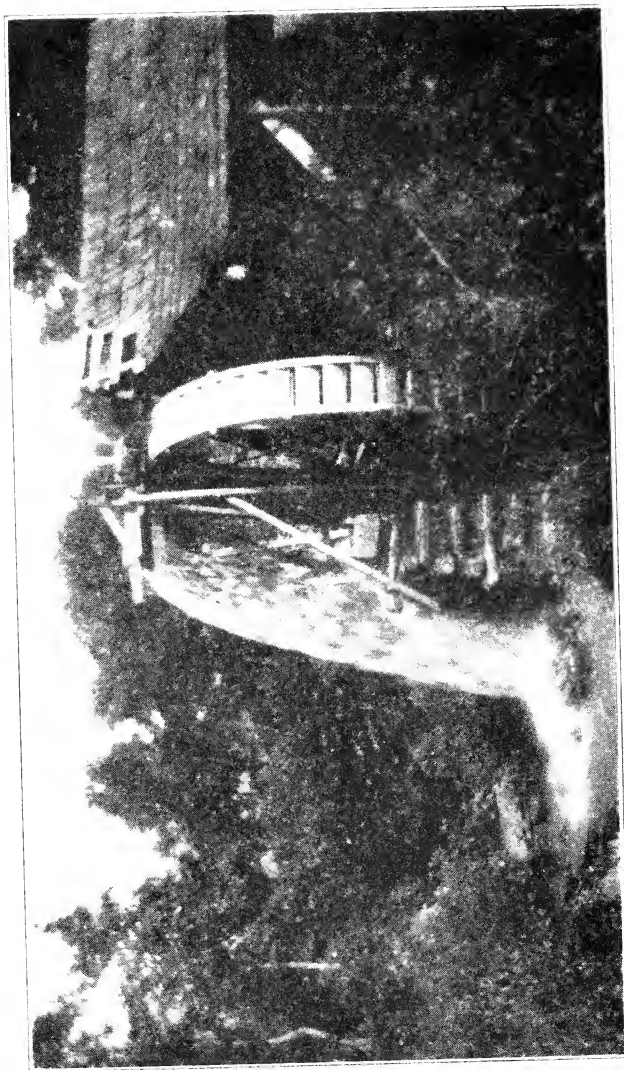
selves after their sad plight in Doubting Castle, and where they saw afar the towers of the Celestial City? Do you remember the shepherds, who took them about from point to point, to show them the beauties of the place, and to point them on their way? Well, these are the Delectable Mountains. And the shepherds who were so kind, — they live here too. Let us go along the winding roads till we meet them.

For the roads all wind here; there are no straight roads. In the days when the fathers began to make good roads, and learned that they must have easy grades, they began to curve their lines around the hills; and so fixed has the habit become now that even where there might be a straight road, through the flat woods, by preference it winds. Do not deceive yourselves by its apparent direction, and try a short cut to reach the other extreme of the curve; as soon as it is out of your sight, it will hitch itself around the other way,

purposely to leave you stranded a mile from the path.

But though the roads are crooked, they lead to the dwellings of the shepherds. "Howdy, brother! Stay all night with us." And as the days wax chill, and you find it uncomfortable to sleep in the woods, the invitation is welcome indeed. Around a roaring fire in the great rock fireplace, we sit with a homespun, homely, home-loving group, and lead on, with the aid of the Book, to the story of our pilgrimage, our ardent hopes of the Celestial City, yea, of our Saviour so soon to come. Good talk, I warrant you, will you find. If the shepherds are rustic, they are not uncultured, if mayhap, gentle pilgrim, you are wise to recognize their culture. Gracious and courteous, interested but respectful, they entertain you right royally.

But come; for supper is ready, and smoking hot it comes upon the table. "What, you eat no bacon? Try this venison, or



The Mill

“How the little cascades tumble down from the mountains!”

is fried chicken" — and I had thought them fried mush balls, till in my innocence I tasted one, and then I thought them fish! "No," says the mother, "I don't believe in coffee myself; it's bad for the liver. But surely you drink something at meals? Really, you'll starve." And the table groans with more than our meager table knows: hominy and corn bread, sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes, peach preserves and hot apple sauce, and hot biscuits — "Have a *hot* biscuit; those by you are getting cold." And so I take another hot biscuit, break it open and lay it on the side of my plate to cool, while I surreptitiously sequester a cool one from the near-by plate.

I am living all this over (and how much more!) with my good friends up on Brushy Creek; would I might mention their names in memory of grace. But everywhere we meet them; and we go on our way the next morning with a glow in our hearts that

surely none but the shepherds of the Delectable Mountains could inspire.

How the little cascades tumble down from the mountains! This is a land of springs, of flowing waters. You need never thirst here. And so easy is it to find springs that the inhabitants have grown shiftless thereby. Dig a well up on a hill, when there is a spring in the gulch? No; build down by the spring. We note this everywhere, that the little houses are down in the hollows, where their inhabitants can reach the springs, and the big houses of the people who come in for health or rest or pleasure, are built up on the hills, where they can see the sky.

Across the road there run tiny streams at every little interval. And on the thirsty days how refreshing! Only, as we stoop to catch the sparkling waters, there will cross the mind a sudden spasm of fear, the suspicion that somewhere up on the branch there may be a cabin and a pigsty, for of

course the pigs must get to water! Once in awhile, some kind soul has fashioned from a wayside spring a drinking trough, with a clear stream piped into it; and to this unknown benefactor I always feel like pouring out a libation as I repeat Scott's lines:

“Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and pray
For the kind soul of Sibyl Gray,
Who built this cross and well.”

As I come out from under the apple trees morning by morning, on my way to the barn, the dawn lifts its pure face over the eastern mountains. Always I feel lifted above the things of earth by that sudden tableau. No burst of music from cathedral organ, no chant of choral voices, can work the wonders wrought in the soul by that morning vision. To come out from under the apple trees on the straight path, to lift the eyes to the sky, is like coming to the brow of a cliff and stretching new-found wings — the wings of morning — in flight over the world beneath. The strength-girt

hills, the sky in soft raiment, the mystery of the mists, the steadfast majesty of the forests, the tinkle of the rock-hampered waters in the brook, all are caught and blended in a great thanksgiving, a mighty benediction. Constantly with us here is the spirit of the hills that inspired Lucy Larcom in her "Prayer on the Mountain:"

"Gird me with the strength of Thy steadfast hills,

The speed of Thy streams give me.

In the spirit that calms, with the life that thrills,

I would stand or run for Thee.

Let me be Thy voice, or Thy silent power,

As the cataract, or the peak,—

An eternal thought, in my earthly hour,

Of the living God to speak.

"Clothe me in the rose tints of Thy skies,

Upon morning summits laid;

Robe me in the purple and gold that flies

Through Thy shuttles of light and shade;

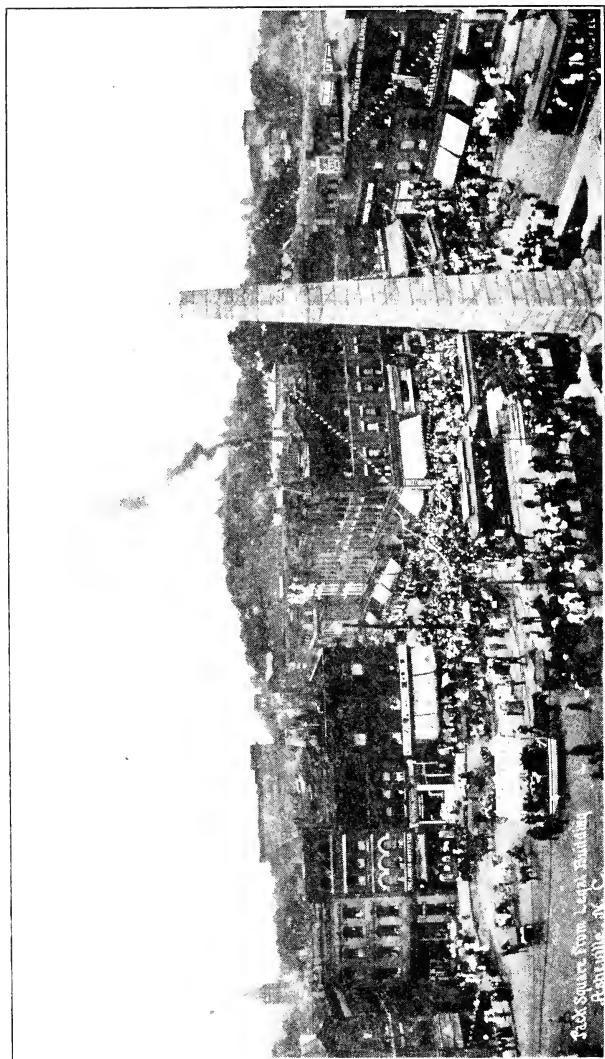
Let me rise and rejoice in Thy smile aright,

As mountains and forests do;

Let me welcome Thy twilight and Thy night

And wait for Thy dawn anew.

“ Give me of the brook’s faith, joyously sung
 Under clank of its icy chain;
Give me of the patience that hides among
 Thy hilltops, in mist and rain;
Lift me up from the clod, let me breathe Thy
 breath;
 Thy beauty and strength give me;
Let me lose both the name and the meaning
 of death
In the life that I share with Thee.”



© Herbert W. Pelton

Asheville, North Carolina

“Standing on the public square at Asheville, you cannot fail, almost any day, of being entertained.”

The State of Religion

QUITE recently I stayed overnight up on the French Broad River, with a young man who stands high in his community as farmer, citizen, and Christian. I found him not only a man wide awake in all business affairs, but one whose practical piety I could not doubt. I saw it in his benevolence toward orphans and other needy ones, one or more of whom he had in his family or was educating at distant schools; in his earnest endeavors to raise the standard of piety in his home church, which included a crusade against tobacco using; and in the fact that he leaves his very comfortable home and the superintendency of his highly cultivated farm for several weeks every winter to circulate the blessed Bible where most needed.

In the course of a conversation, he told me of an experience he had had the year before in the county convention of his church. Though a layman, he was placed as chairman on the committee "On the State of Religion."

"I knew I couldn't write the report," he said to me, "so I just knelt down and asked the Lord to write it through me." He showed me the report which he presented as (with amendments) it was printed in the published minutes.

Beginning with the statement, "The people of this county have forsaken God in their lives," it went on to particularize the apathy of church members in spiritual exercises, their use of liquor and tobacco, filthy and frivolous conversation, and the niggardliness that made the per capita offering only one dollar a year.

The report was not adopted without severe criticism and amendment. But the marvelous thing to me is, not that such a

report could be truthfully written; for of what community could not this and much more be said? but according to my observation, the marvel is that there should be a man with the spiritual insight and the divine courage to uncover the plague spot and call for a cure. And that there are such men in this mountain country is evidence that "the state of religion" is not so backward as in sections supposed to be farther advanced. A generation or two ago, almost anywhere in the United States there could be found such Jeremiahs, but the last few decades have advanced the church into Babylonian captivity; and now we find, north, east, and west, on the one hand a general indifference to or contempt of religion, on the other hand a formal adherence to mere church forms and a satisfaction in institutional methods.

But here in the mountains I observe many evidences of the existence of the old-time religion — a fact mirrored, indeed, in

all its virtues and all its faults, in the refrain of the popular song often sung in the country churches:

“ 'Tis the old-time religion,
'Tis the old-time religion,
'Tis the old-time religion,
 And it's good enough for me.
It's good enough for me,
It's good enough for me;
'Twas good enough for Joseph (or
 Moses or Daniel or father, etc.),
 And it's good enough for me.”

When I first arrived in the mountain country and its metropolis, I was impressed with the evident influence of religion that lay upon the minds of all classes. Going along the streets and hearing the sound of a piano from some stately mansion, I found the music more often a hymn tune than a waltz. Was a tuneful voice raised in song, it was most likely, “What a Friend we have in Jesus,” or “Rock of Ages.” And however sincere or

insincere the singer, he furnished evidence that the power of religion was yet uppermost in the society of the mountains. Even when in convivial state, the average man's stream of thought was dammed within the levee of the hymn. One night I met a wagonload of men whose reckless driving and personal abandon proclaimed their recent visit to a moonshine still. They were roaring out a song, and what do you think it was? — "We Won't Go Home Till Morning," or "There'll Be a Hot Time"? No; ludicrously inappropriate to that rollicking, drunken crowd, it was —

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie!"

Standing on the public square at Asheville, you cannot fail, almost any day, of being entertained (if you find entertainment therein) by little knots of men of the farmer and laboring classes, vigorously



In the Mountains

"For the roads all wind here; there are no straight roads."

discussing with voice and finger and clenched hand, the doctrines of predestination, baptism, falling from grace, and sanctification. Here in this city, indeed, meet the farthest extremes of the ecclesiastical domain. And here is the most concentrated cosmopolitanism on the earth, if classes rather than nationalities be regarded. The nabobs of society from New York to Charleston and New Orleans, touch elbows on the sidewalks with lank-haired, check-shirted mountaineers; and automobiles find in the deliberate oxcart a more effective regulator of speed than the policeman's billy. Likewise, the churches run a wide gamut, from stone cathedrals, where the highest culture is ministered to by men trained in the latest American theology if not in German radicalism, down to little chapels of battened boards, where hell-fire is still vigorously preached.

What I have related, however, may be regarded as only the foam on this broad,

moving sea of religion. It is certainly true that the sober thought of most of the people, especially in the country, has to do with religion. Radicalism on the one hand and infidelity on the other, are beginning their inroads; but, back to back, the church yeomanry are making a sturdy fight against them. And the ministry in general, is seeking with more or less intelligence to direct this battle. I know of city ministers who spend their entire Sundays, and some of their week days, apart from the necessary duties of their own charges, in visiting unshepherded, neglected communities in the country, seeking to inculcate piety and Bible knowledge by means of Sunday schools and pastoral visits. And I have found, as I have traveled through parts of the country and have talked with the people, not a few young men able and willing to discuss matters of religion. So many of these young men, indeed, are taking courses in theology in various schools

that it has seemed to me the mountains must be furnishing the best recruiting ground for such schools. Such young men are in the minority, it is true, but there is a goodly number of them.

The country ministry and partially the city ministry seem to realize more or less keenly that it is a losing fight they are making. With a dull longing, it has seemed to me, for better weapons, they take up again and again the old instruments with which the fathers met backsliding and indifference, and grasping the swords of revivals and protracted meetings, struggle desperately to kill the giants and bring their heads into the camp. Still is the red vengeance of a sin-hating God shaken over heads that tremble less and less as the years go by; still are the loving mercies of a sin-pardoning Saviour held out to hands too listless to open; and it has gone to my heart to witness the bravely hidden chagrin (perhaps I should say sor-

row) of the minister closing a "protracted meeting" without one soul "saved."

Yet the mass of the people are religious. But the revival is beginning to pall upon their taste. The reaction following this time of excitement is discouraging, and I can almost justly compare their reluctance to imbibe this spiritual liquor with their good sense in voting the State "dry." Many are hungering for more satisfying, vital truth. It is time wise efforts were being made to satisfy this hunger; not with more dogmas, but with the vital central truth of the free atonement of Jesus; not with suspicion and fighting of ministers and people who may resent the preaching of strange doctrines, but with the gentle ministrations of Jesus to body and soul. And I believe, from experience, that an earnest Christian purpose, transforming our faces and our actions, will be welcomed by a sorely pressed people who still love "the old-time religion" of Jesus Christ.

That this religious conservatism, doggedly resisting in front and rear the attacks of the devil, may be ascribed in some degree to the isolation of the mountains, I will not deny; but I have fondly given credit also to other vital factors, namely, the inherent life of the two great forces, the conservative Baptist and the aggressive Methodist. While in early days active antagonists, their separate influences nevertheless combined to form characters at once cautious of innovation and eager to find truth. Until recent years, indeed, Baptists and Methodists practically shared this country between them; and today the common inquiry is, "Are you a Baptist, or a Methodist?" Being neither, you must be nothing. Mine host of the French Broad told me a story well illustrating this fact.

Not so very many years ago, he said, a Presbyterian¹ minister came up into the

¹ The story is a favorite one in the mountains, more often, however, told with an Episcopalian than a Presbyterian setting.

mountains to search out what chance members of his flock he might find. He said little about his order until he was well up in the mountains. Then one day, coming to a cabin where was a gentle old lady, he stopped to converse with her; and he finally asked, "Sister, do you know if there are any Presbyterians hereabouts?"

She slowly shook her head. "Hain't never heerd on 'em," she said, "but I tell ye, my old man hunts for a livin', an' he's tacked up on the back wall of the shanty the skins of all the varmints he's ever killed. Ye might go out and look."

In any case, these two great denominations have long occupied and prepared this field, and still occupy it, at least passively. Presbyterianism is making great headway, through schools large and small, and Roman Catholicism has a foothold in the cities, while the Episcopal Church has a vogue among the upper classes. But new and false cults are making attacks upon

the old-time ramparts: Millennial Dawn is scattering its free literature everywhere, and various forms and shades of "holiness" teaching are making raids upon the churches. Many winds of doctrine are blowing, many minds are being befooled, yet hearts fainting for fear are crying for comfort and help.

It is not the pulpit orator nor the emotional evangelist who is needed to help the people of the mountains. Their need is the need of the world: it is the need of men who live the truth. Too much have the people been dosed with emotionalism, too many ministers are there to hysterical devotion. It is not difficult to find at some of the "protracted meetings," scenes that rival the religious passion of Negro orgies farther south, when, in the grip of "the Spirit," women scream and weep, when the preacher excites himself into the fearsome "holy laugh," and when bodies, writhing and contorted, are cast before "the mercy-

seat." Offspring of the rough unculture of pioneer days and the license of a young religion in its first spasms of protest against formalism, this abandoned dissipation of nervous power, which generations ago may have been a natural outburst, is now diligently sought as the evidence of acceptance with God. It is not the exciting of this spirit in any form that the people need. Popular revival methods do not reach the soul.

The resemblance of this spiritual intoxication to barroom inebriety always reminds me of the story Mark Andrews tells of one of our neighbors, good old Madison Lumly. Madison, along about Civil War time, was something of a preacher. He was drafted into the Southern army, where he served unwillingly because of hunger if of nothing else. One day, with four of his messmates, he was out near the lines, glumly viewing prospects in the shape of a small stick of corn pone.

“No use talkin’, fellers,” said Wes Adams, “we got to git some grub, or we’ll shore starve.”

Just then a pig stumbled along under the trees near them. Four rifles were instantly raised.

“Don’t shoot, boys, don’t shoot!” cried Preacher Madison, “that ain’t your pig. You’ll be stealin’. I won’t eat no stolen meat.”

“Stealin’ or no stealin’,” said Wes, “I’m goin’ to shoot that pig.” And his rifle cracked. The pig was speedily skinned, and slices of bacon were soon sizzling in the pan.

Madison drew his belt up tighter and hitched himself halfway around; then, as the others commenced to eat, he took out his little corn pone and began munching. But pretty soon the sight and smell began to press the picket line of his virtue very hard, and with a solemn countenance he said, “Boys, I shore won’t eat none of that



Primitive but Comfortable
A log home in the hills o' Ca'liny.

stolen meat, but you kin give me some of the gravy!")

The reprobate's way of becoming happy is by loss of self-control through alcohol; the penitent seeks the same self-abandonment through another agent. The dance hall attracts the unregenerate by its excitement and its social intercourse; for it the man-controlled revival makes a passable substitute. They all come out of the same pan. And the dry bread of creed-religion makes it pretty hard to resist calling for some of the gravy. Poor people! not only of the mountains, but of the wide country. Blind leaders! self-deluded or worse. Who is there to teach that religion lies not in frenzy, but in service? Who will come back to the simplicity and the depth of the Saviour's methods? Emphatically, it is not the emotional preacher that the mountains need.

No, it is not emotion, nor is it creed, that can better the state of religion. But

it is the revivifying touch of the spiritually charged that will bring the life of Christ into the coves and the valleys, upon the hills and the mountains, into the cities and the country. As the Man of Galilee went about from Capernaum to Jerusalem, restoring health to the fevered, relieving the hungry, sympathizing with the grief-stricken, and healing the broken of heart, so today are His servants, if they would prove their apostleship, to minister to the sick, to clothe the naked, and to speak from their heart experiences the love that draws to abounding, eternal life. Into the valiant but fainting soul of religion is to be poured the life of Christian service. This is the ministry demanded by the state of religion in the mountains.

I shall not easily forget a scene impressed on my mind one Sunday afternoon, a scene that stands out from others of its kind only because of the greater pathos of a more forlorn home. We had gone, at the

suggestion of a good Methodist neighbor, to visit an old woman, bedridden for six months and in the last stages of tuberculosis.

A married daughter, with several unkempt children, had come home to care for her mother. The two-room house was filthy almost beyond description. The cold and broken remains of several successive meals were heaped upon the table, feast for the swarms of flies.

The young woman put back the strings of uncombed hair from before her snuff-stained face, and greeted us with some shamefacedness. She didn't reckon her mother would want to see any one; talkin' disturbed her, and she reckoned singin' would. But we went into the other room, where the old woman lay in a stupor, upon a cord bed that had not been disturbed since she first lay down upon it.

For some time we talked in low tones with the daughter, while the old lady

seemed to take no notice. But when at last we suggested going, she proved she had heard by whispering to know if we would not sing.

"Do you want us to sing?"

"Yes, ef 'twon't hurt ye."

So we sang, softly, the old, familiar hymns. We did not think of the new songs, the transient favorites. Somehow, in that hour, our minds and our souls wanted to grip something of eternal realities, and we sang, "Jesus, lover of my soul," "There is a fountain filled with blood," "There's a land that is fairer than day," and "Tell me the old, old story."

As we came to the chorus of that last hymn, the old woman's wasted hand was lifted on the quilt, and she began feebly to pat in time with the music. A little stronger and stronger she seemed to grow, until she set both hands softly to clapping, and as we reached the last verse, she broke out, as she had been wont to do in her

happy Methodist meetings: "I know that old, old story," she cried, "O yes, I know that story! Tell it again, tell it again! I know that old, old story of Jesus and His love."

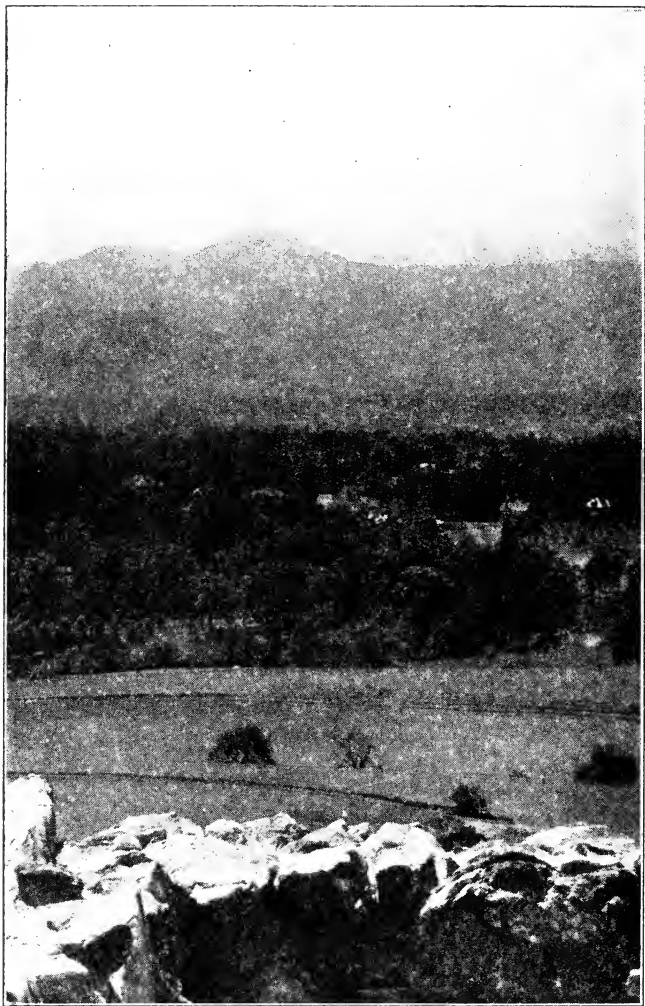
Her husband, a fine, white-haired old man, had come in with an armful of wood, which he had thrown by the fireplace, and now he sat there upon it, his face working with emotion. I went up to the sick woman, and softly spoke to her of Jesus. Would she have us pray with her? O yes, she would! And we knelt there, while my wife and I sent up petitions for the soul of this woman and the blessing of her house. The presence of God was in that room. The two or three children who had crowded in, stood with awe-widened eyes, and their stolid, snuff-drenched mother was wiping her eyes. The old man, with tears streaming down his face, said as he bade us good-by, "Come again, friends. Come right frequent."

The next day the two young women students who had accompanied us there, went back to help. They had two of the boys carry over a large arm rocker; they got the old woman up and comfortably placed in the chair, while they took off the straw tick and had the boys refill it. They helped the daughter clean the house, as much as prudence and sensibility permitted; they cleansed and dressed the old woman's bed-sores, and finally put her back to bed, more comfortable and happy than she had been for a year. She poured blessings upon their heads and called them angels, and roused herself to sniff eagerly at the flowers they brought. Several times before her death were visits made to cheer and help her, and the influence was not lost in that home nor in that community.

I know not if the religion of mere creed and cold argument brings satisfaction to the souls of any who seek by mere outward observances to gain heaven; but I do know

that the religion — be it of doctrine or of unphrased spirit — that translates itself into glad helping of others, is a religion that brings the love of Jesus into the soul. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

And if into the soul of such a lover of Jesus is poured the grand, the awful, the joyous truth of the soon coming of Christ, he is urged by the impending dissolution of the world and the settlement of the destinies of all men, and inspired by the glad prospect of meeting his Saviour and his Master in glory, to give his utmost to this the only cause he can know. The herald of the coming King must be the personal representative of his Sovereign in the homes and the communities he visits. For such heralds are the mountains waiting.



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Mt. Pisgah

"A beautiful, dome-shaped mass, Mt. Pisgah is approached on the east along the ridge of Little Pisgah, which because of its rodent-like appearance from Asheville, has received the nickname, 'The Rat.'"

The Path to Pisgah

MT. PISGAH dominates the French Broad Valley. Though not the loftiest of the score of mile-high peaks that keep Mt. Mitchell company, it occupies the most commanding position in the view from Asheville to Brevard, and, next to Mitchell, is the most talked of and the most frequently visited of all the Carolina mountains.

A beautiful dome-shaped mass, steep, almost sheer, on three sides, it is approached on the east along the ridge of Little Pisgah, a ridge which, because of its rodent-like appearance from Asheville, has received the nickname of "The Rat." Southward from the big mountain runs Pisgah Ridge, a series of peaks and connecting elevations that, nearly circling Lake Toxaway, finally

lose themselves in the ramparts of the Blue Ridge.

Famed in song and story is the region which Pisgah conspires with the Blue Ridge and the Great Smokies to shut in. Its hill-broken expanse lies before him who stands upon Pisgah's height. And not ill-named is Pisgah; for, while the mountains to the west shut off the view from a possible Great Sea, far to the north lies Mt. Mitchell, the Hermon of the Appalachians, while between stretches the fruitful plateau of the French Broad like another Jordan Valley. And so it was with some tinglings of anticipated pleasure that I found my feet on the path of Pisgah.

Crossing the river over Long Shoals Bridge, I found myself the first night sheltered in the hospitable home of an Esau whom I had met that morning hunting in the fields. Those late days of November bore suggestions of winter's reign, and the night was cool enough to make us wel-

come the leaping flames in the stone fireplace. Several men there were staying with Brother Esau, one a school-teacher, another a miller, and still another a farm hand; and the conversation that night was varied and sprightly. I had the book before them all, and one point in the canvass awakened the curiosity of Brother Esau.

“Now what do you think of this everlasting torment?” he asked. “I ain’t much Bible-read myself, but some says one thing, and some says another, and I should like to know for sure.”

I let the school-teacher talk on the subject for a while; and then taking out my pocket Bible, I read some texts, a very few, with an explanation of Revelation 20:10, that quite satisfied Brother Esau and the miller, but left the school-teacher a little hostile. However, none of them wanted the book.

“Fact is,” said Brother Esau, “I got burnt on one book. The fellow said it was

a Bible, but when I got it, I found it was a Mormon Bible. Er — no (turning to his wife)— what was it? An Advent Bible, I believe. Yes, that's it, an Advent Bible."

"What is an Advent Bible?" I asked, with true innocence. "I never heard of an Advent Bible."

"Well, it's over there in the corner. I'll show it to you. Old Pap Somers come by after I'd bought it, and he says, says he, 'Huh! hit may be you kin stand this here, but you don't wan' to let your children see it.' And so I kivered it under all them books and papers, an' I ain't never looked at it sence."

It was dug out from its hiding place, and presented for my inspection. And with great curiosity I looked upon the Advent Bible. A part of the title was there, sure enough,—Bible,—“Bible Readings”!

"Why, I know that book," I said, "I have it myself. It isn't a new kind of Bible; but it's made up of questions and

answers taken from God's Book, the true Bible. Have you ever read in it?"

"Not much," he said; "not after old Pap Somers warned me. But I reckon hit's all right, sence you say so." And I really had some hope that he might thereafter touch the Advent Bible less gingerly.

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The morning was bright, clear, and cold, with a wind out of the northwest. Pisgah was wreathed with a circlet of snow, which in the distance, through the frost-laden air, looked like a white cloud. I stepped along briskly, drawing in with delight the pure, crisp air. Around a turn of the road I passed out of the woods into a clearing a mile or two long, cluttered with log cabins. It was a Negro settlement. As I neared the first house, a small cabin with a lean-to and one window beside the chimney, my ears were greeted with a fierce hubbub, half a dozen voices combining in a dread cacophony, above which a child's voice and a

woman's voice rose shrilly. "I'll skin yo' alive!" I heard just as I came to the open door.

"Good morning," I interrupted incisively.

The racket miraculously died. "Mo'nin', suh. Yassuh; we's all well, 'ceptin' fo' de fightin'. Mighty ornery passel o' chillun, suh! Books! Huh! No, suh; I ain' got no money fo' no *books*. I's a po' widow woman, an' I has to mek a libbin' fo' dese chilluns at de washtub. Co'se my husban' he wu'ks in de limekiln — uh — uh — my oldes' son, I mean."

I did not smile. Perhaps it was her oldest son; Maria had an enviable reputation for veracity among her white neighbors. And Maria took a book — two books.

.

I took Thanksgiving dinner with the squire. A hearty man is the squire, ex-sheriff and present assemblyman, with a quiet, straight-looking gray eye, grizzled

hair, and a handclasp that has no sham in it. His wife, a busy, bustling woman, presides at a bountiful board, whose length can afford no explanation but of frequent and generous company.

It was Thanksgiving dinner, spread late for the sons who came from the city, bringing with them their wives and children, stately dames and rollicking boys. Yet in this family reunion the stranger was made welcome, despite the added fact that he ate no turkey nor bacon nor venison, and was therefore jocularly called a Jew. And around the evening fire, backed in a corner with the little ones, the stranger found himself not merely welcomed but hailed a hero, because he was a story-teller.

The squire's is a great old rambling house, built piece by piece, yet modernized with piazzas and plenty of paint — a house set in a fine old oak grove, and backed by spacious barns; for the squire owns broad acres of river bottom, and his horses and

dairy cattle and hogs have taken prizes at the county fair — not that the squire bends his back so much in the fields now; his day for that is past: he is a public-service man, and he has a son-in-law to superintend the blacks.

Almost it seemed we were back in *ante bellum* days; for there were Negro house servants and Negro field hands, Negro boys and girls and mammies, Negro minstrels and Negro jollity. There was a young Negro butler, and a fat, jolly old Auntie Dede for cook. A Negro boy tended the fires, a Negro girl was ready at beck and call for errands; and during the evening could be heard, back in the kitchen and long dining-hall, the scraping of the fiddle and the shuffling of feet, with bursts of laughter and railery, where the servants, all of one hue, were making merry.

.

My path to Pisgah was not direct. It is a wide country lying at the foot of the

mountain; on one side I visited three or four hundred homes. It was up toward the head of the North Fork, the second week, that I found Loney. Up a creek, off the road, a faint wagon trail ran, and I followed it and my nose — especially my nose — until I came to the cause. Passing the pigsty, I came to the log house. A woman, with uncombed, coarse black hair, and a subdued expression in her fading eyes, opened the door. Within were several children, one of whom was a plump-faced girl of sixteen, almost the mirror of her mother, but without the subdued expression. She was Loney.

I talked with them about the book, and with each telling point came their prompt assent, especially when my eye lifted to appeal to theirs: "Yes, suh! Indeed! Shu' nuff! Law, yes! Yes, suh!" It meant no profound agreement; it was simply the requirement of etiquette.

"Let's take the book, maw."

“ What d'you think yore paw would say, Loney? ”

“ What kin he say? Co'se he'll r'ar, but that don't do nothin.' ”

“ No, I don't reckon we'd better. Powerful hard to git any money now.”

“ Yes, but, maw, let's take it. I liked that last part the most.”

So I turned again with them to the preparation for Jesus' coming, and read and talked. The New Jerusalem and the new earth! How incomprehensible a change from the surroundings in which we read of them! Could the book ever lift them toward it?

“ I'd give a dollar just to read that,” exclaimed Loney. “ Let's take it, maw. Paw can't say nothin'. Co'se he'll chase us, but we-all kin run faster'n he kin.”

So they took it. And up above the joists, on some loose boards, they discovered a purse, paw's purse, out of which to pay for a primer also. I wondered, as I left, if

Loney would take the book when it came, and what the book might do for her. But sure enough, I found her when the time came to deliver, away up on a front seat in a closely packed crowd at a Christmas tree in the country chapel, her handkerchief tightly twisted and wadded in her workaday hands, quivering with excitement over the great event, but ready for the book. Leaving me screened at the door by a boisterous crew of gallants and red-cheeked girls, she went in search of, and found, a very manageable "paw," who had a dollar. So Loney took the book.

I think often of her, eager, lawless, untrained. What forces will there be that shall bring the light of truth and love into the darkened coves of the Forks, north, south, east, and west? Maybe the book is glimmering yet in Loney's home, keeping alive the longing for the sunlight of education and salvation. Oh, when shall it come?

At last I was at the head of the valley, had come to the last human habitation, was entering the wild, wide-stretching domain of Vanderbilt. Up under the shoulder of Pisgah he had a hunting lodge, a massive log structure, where once in a year or two he came with a party to shoot, or shoot at, the deer and bear with which his hundred-thousand-acre preserve was stocked, or at the wolves and catamounts that warily invaded the wide waste. A world as primeval, almost, as in the beginning.

A few rangers he had, who peopled the woods more scantily than the Cherokees of old, too few, indeed, wholly to prevent the depredations of poachers. Everywhere up under the brows of Pisgah, I was offered venison at breakfast, dinner, and supper, the fortunate possessors of which averred that the deer were always coming down out of Vanderbilt's lands — such a nuisance! When they got to eating their corn, of course they had to shoot them!

For two or three miles I had been warned not to attempt to reach the lodge that night. Yes, there were keepers there, but it was too far.

“How far?”

“Wal, right smart.”

“Five or six miles?”

“Reckon so.”

“Any one could make that before dark.”

“Wal, don’t reckon.”

A mile or two farther on, however, the distance had lengthened in the report of another to eight or nine miles. Finally at half past three o’clock, I came to the last house. The old man was a little grumpy, and I think he didn’t wish to keep me overnight, suspecting something not quite orthodox about my book.

Yes, he said, I could make it before dark, he thought. It was seven miles. Go up the road to Yellow Gap, take the trail there to the right, and follow it to the lodge. Plain way!

I went up to Yellow Gap; I took the trail to the right; I entered upon the plain way. The trail was fairly plain. It had been well made, and the incline was seldom steep. The falling leaves had carpeted it thickly, but the depression where it had been dug or trodden against the hills was sufficient to mark it more plainly than many another trail I have followed.

On and on it went; in and out it wound. Around the shoulder of a hill, going a little up; along the inner margin of a gloomy amphitheater, ascending a little higher; around another shoulder, skirting another amphitheater, coming out upon a dipping ridge or gap between two knobs; then again the hills, the amphitheaters, two or three times repeated, and again the gap; until certain expectation began to make of it a curious double-faced monotony. And ever the sun sank lower, the shadows grew more pronounced, the gloom of the gulches deeper.

I fell to noting the leaves that carpeted the trail, bright or dull or withered, mostly oak and maple. If there were any others, they were lost in the multitudes of these dominant races of the forest. If I paused a moment to listen, almost surely the only sound was the soft, still dropping of the leaves, sounding like the muffled pattering of rain. So still! And the words of a book came back to me: "When every earthly sound is hushed, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God." The mighty hills, the towering trees, the flickering sunbeams through the foliage, the glimpses of far blue sky, the infinite hush,—all these speak eloquently, though with blurred accent from their crushed tracings, to my sin-dulled heart. And even the falling leaves, have they not a message? O falling, faded, withered leaves, you were once the words of God! now, alas! almost silenced in the deadening fogs of sin. Hasten the day when again whatever the

hand or the breath of God has touched may be read as an open book of familiar characters!

Tramp, tramp, tramp, a weary way! The seven miles were gone; they stretched into ten. And the trail wound on and on, around and around, still rising, still leading, but never ending. The sun sank lower and lower. The trail beneath the trees was dark, though the sunset lingered, a red splendor, for an hour. Then it paled to saffron, to purple; and in place of the day ruler, blazed out at last the evening star. Wearily I kept along the trail, now in complete darkness except for the starlight. I felt with my feet the slight depression that marked the path, and for two hours in the darkness plodded on through the forest. My eyes were staring wide for light, and sometimes I fancied they caught a gleam; my ears were straining for other sounds than those that came, the hoot of owls and the far-off howl of a wolf, and several

times I stopped in vain to verify my impression of a human voice. Once I passed the mouth of a cave, and almost decided to creep in and wait for day; but the thought that the lodge must be near by now decided me, and on I went.

At last, O joy! from out of the waste of nature I came upon the works of man, a fence and a gate. Where there is a gate, there must be a habitation, and I went joyfully through and cast about for the house. But the most that I could find was a signboard a few steps beyond. I went up to it, and in the light of brilliant Venus I strained my eyes to read it. I read it. Mockingly it said, "Good-Enough Trail."

Far be it from me to quarrel with the genial signboard. The trail, indeed, like the old-time religion, might be good enough for me, if only I could keep it. But what I longed for was not so much a better trail as to know where any trail had an end. It seemed, indeed, to have ended there. It

was in one of the familiar gaps between two knobs; and seek as I would, casting about here and there over the ground beyond the signboard, my feet could not find any well-defined trail. Small wonder! the next day I discovered that at this point, within the fence, the cattle had so trodden over the little glade through which the trail ran that there was no trail.

After half an hour of fruitless search in the dark, I gave it up, and crept into a laurel clump to try to sleep. But on the night of the first of December, five thousand feet high, and protected only by a thin raincoat, I could sleep little. I warmed the ground where I lay, and shivered alternately on either side as I turned. At length, when the moon came up, two hours later, I rose with it, and again essayed to find the trail. Even then I could not; but going up the hill in the supposedly right direction, I found, a quarter of a mile beyond, a trail defining itself enough to war-

rant trial, and along it I ventured, again winding and winding, but on rougher, rock-strewn ground.

At last came my reward. Stark and forbidding in the pale moonlight, the log walls of the lodge rose high on a great ledge across the valley. It was just midnight when I came to the coveted destination. Entering through the gates, I went up the drive, which led through an archway between two parts of the building. I did not know where the keepers might be living, but I thought I might discover if I made enough noise. Just as I was passing under the archway, the expected happened. My footsteps waked up one of the inmates; there came out a dog named Nero.

Now it is bad enough to face Nero in the pages of history, when Nero is dead, and plainly in the wrong; but it is worse to face Nero in the flesh, when one is a trespasser, and Nero is clearly in the right. I spoke to the dog, and I spoke for his

keeper, but the one would not heed nor the other hear; and at last before the advancing Nero I retired, and resigned myself to the remainder of a sleepless night.

At first I ensconced myself beside a log, covering up with leaves like the babes in the woods. But the wind searched me out, and I soon arose, and striking another trail, went out upon a long ridge. After a while, discovering a rock, I sprang down behind it to be sheltered from the wind. So far I had been careful not to light a fire; for the forest floor was like tinder, and numerous posters along the trail had warned, among other things, against "setting out fires" under penalty of law. But now the cold beginning to be numbing, I cautiously built a little fire against the rock, a fire which gave me much vigil and a little comfort, until the day dawned.

I hailed the first gray streaks in the east, and stretched my stiffened limbs in a brisk walk upon the heights. The sunrise,

though not so grand as I had expected, was not without its beauty. A long streak of a cloud thrust its lancelike point downward toward the sun, which answered in its own characteristic way, setting the point on fire and burning its way slowly along the cloud's white length, swiftly running from red to smoky yellow, to white ash. Then, low down, burned up suddenly a fiery red arch, like the mouth of a great furnace, growing ever greater. Out of this there grew up a smaller yellow circle, and out of that, still lower, a blazing white one, three disks in one, each of which in turn I took for the orb. At last the sun was up, gazing down upon the white sea of mists below. And December had dawned. I turned again toward the lodge, to seek a breakfast.

It was a royal breakfast that greeted me, too bountiful, indeed, for my needs. The ranger, Davis, had already gone out to look after his traps (two of which, hidden in

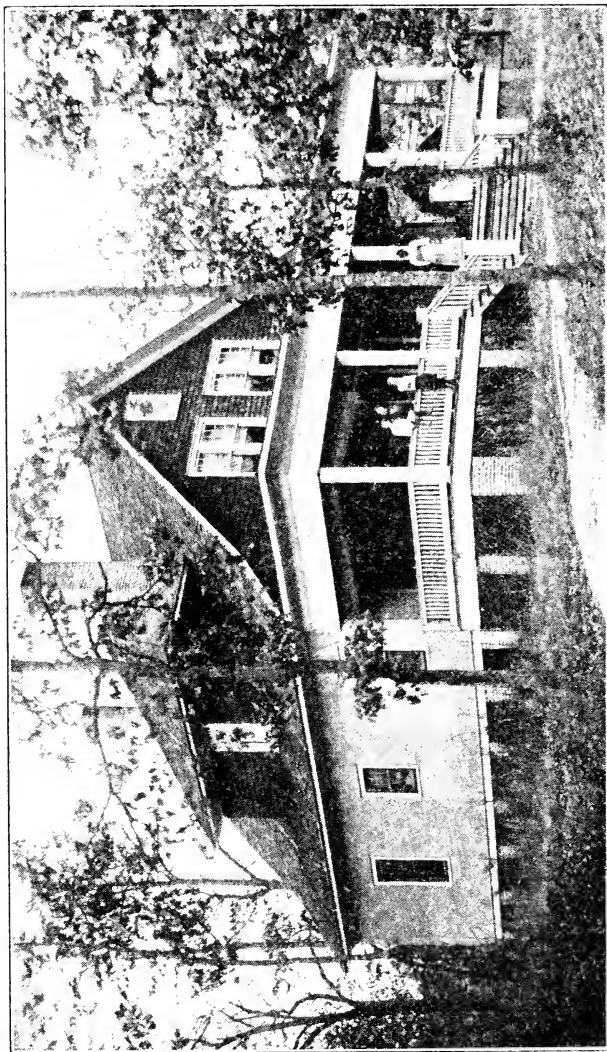
the trail, I unwittingly sprang with my heel later in the day), but his wife welcomed me. Seldom for six months in the year did she see another face than her husband's and her child's, so not only the visitor but the book was welcome there. A lonely life, and not without its dangers! Poor woman! I saw her again just a few days ago, in the county courtroom, clad in deep mourning. She was there to attend the trial of the murderer of her husband, shot from ambush for interfering with a poacher — his life for the life of the deer.

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About ten o'clock that morning I stood upon the top of Mt. Pisgah. The day was warm, so that I had labored with discarded coat upon the last stage of the trail. Upon the rounded bald top of three or four acres I stood, and surveyed in every direction a sea of mountains, with valleys and plains farther away. Far off, in three different directions, could be seen the cities of the

plain. It was an inspiring sight, one that drew the thoughts to the vastness of the land and the busy activity of the men therein. Yet here, far up in the clear, crisp atmosphere, away from all human sounds, and out of sight of every moving thing save the soaring vultures, there was an isolation, a celibacy of thought and feeling, that brought to mind that last scene "on Nebo's lonely mountain." I opened my Bible and read again the last three chapters of Deuteronomy; and with the echo in my heart of that matchless benediction, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," I prayed for the speedy evangelization of all the land that lay before me.

The path to Pisgah had been traced.



Beth-shan

“But one place there is which I have named ‘The House of Rest.’”

The House of Rest

BETH-SHAN, "The House of Rest," what a peculiarly soothing sense the old Hebrew name gives! Though why the town received its name, or how it could be appropriate to the gruesome sequel of Gilboa, I do not know. But one place there is which I have named "The House of Rest," of whose name I know at once the origin and the appropriateness. It lies on the outskirts of the country over which I ranged, a new, half-bungalow, altogether homelike place, with wide verandas and a cheerful big brick fireplace; with host and hostess of wide-open hearts and hearty voices welcoming; with children who always shouted, "Oh, it's Uncle Arthur!" with a jolly ebony cook named Lily White, who knew what cooking meant; with Sorghum, the

saddle horse, and Kubelik, the terrier, and Billy Possum, the pig.

Perhaps you may think all that an incongruous mixture, but so my memory warms over the varying factors of a time of rest, when often, footsore and heart-sore, I fell, an unexpected but always welcome guest, out of the darkness into the cheer of Mr. George's arguments and Lily's tea biscuits, Mis' Dosia's ringing laugh, and Son's enthusiastic tales of the superior acuteness of his Billy Possum.

It was often with a sort of terror that I looked forward to a night that must be spent among strangers, with wearied body and fagged mind put still to the stretch to entertain and teach; and when but a few miles intervened between me and the House of Rest, temptation more than once was yielded to, and I found myself ensconced before a leaping fire, with muscles and mind relaxed, and keen enjoyment usurping the place of disciplined care.

Mr. George could talk. He had his enthusiasms, and he had his antipathies: loose him on either, and it took only a judicious word, now and then, of encouragement or opposition to furnish an hour's profitable entertainment. His enthusiasms had a fairly wide range, from his prize potatoes to William Jennings Bryan; his antipathies were mainly the result of his enthusiasms.

For one thing, since the Peerless Leader had been thrice defeated, the country had almost gone to the dogs, but there was growing hope, through Democratic gains, that righteousness might yet survive. Surely this glorious land of liberty must be saved! Turn the rascals out, and let good men come in!

But here I had also my enthusiasms, or rather my convictions. "You may legislate forever," I told him, "and put the best possible laws on the statute books, but that will not make men good."

“Of course,” he agreed, “so long as you keep such grafters in office as are there now. We’ve got to have good men, and it’s your duty and mine to go to the polls and put them in.”

“And when you have them in,” said I, “the old world will jog along just about the same. At first, the new broom may seem to sweep clean, but a broom can never sweep darkness out. You’ve got to go behind votes and laws and leaders to get regeneration.”

“You’re a pessimist!” cried Mr. George. “If everybody acted as you talk, where do you think this country would land? We’d have more and more rotten legislation and law enforcement, forever.”

“That depends,” I replied. “I’m not advocating a remedy, but I am repudiating the quack cure-all legislation. The fact is, I don’t expect to see the whole world saved, but out of its ruin I expect to see honest, stalwart souls saved.”

“You’re a pessimist,” iterated Mr. George, “a sure enough pessimist!”

I balanced the term on the point of my criticism. “A pessimist,” I argued, “a pessimist is a man who sees only the evil and looks for no great betterment. If it’s cloudy, he knows it’s going to rain unless the wind changes; if he feels a tickling in his throat, he knows he’s going to die of tuberculosis unless he gets a change of climate; if stocks are going down or the tariff is going up, he knows things are going to smash unless his favorite is elected to Congress. No; I’m not a pessimist. I have a bigger remedy for all this graft and corruption than a political candidate. If I were attempting to get a good crop by scratching my land with a bull-tongue plow, should I blame you for refusing to employ the same method when you had a gang plow and traction engine at home?”

“If you’ve got a better remedy, it’s time to trot it out,” said Mr. George.

“ I look to a more glorious reformation soon than Democratic or Republican ever hoped for,” I continued. “ I’m at work every day to help a little in bringing it about; and the reason I don’t go into politics to make men good is because I’m too busy on this other plan.”

“ If you men don’t stop talking politics,” broke in the patient Mis’ Dosia, “ I’m going to take my work upstairs, where you’ll not be bothered with the click of my needles.”

“ What is your plan? ” asked Mr. George.

“ The plan of salvation through Jesus Christ,” I answered; “ the glorious news of His soon coming and of His present salvation. When the gospel of Jesus Christ gets into the heart, it does what no law and no officer of the law can do. The fact is, there is no other moral regeneration. And a further fact is, the larger the number of us who get to work in this campaign

with heart and soul, the sooner will come the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the good things you hope for, and more."

"I don't doubt you are right there," said Mr. George.

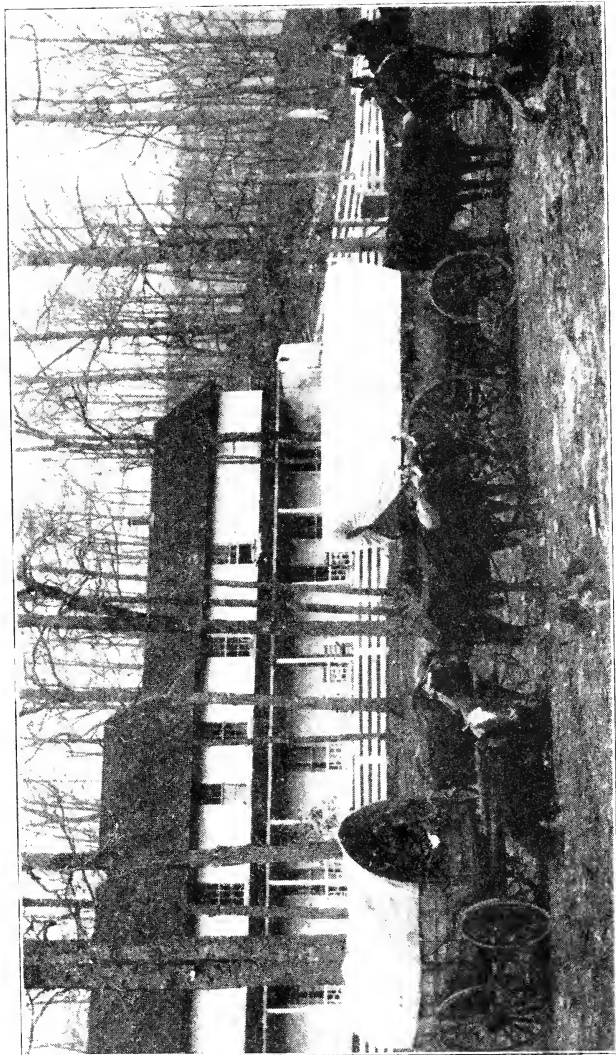
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I had always regarded Mis' Dosia as a Shunammite, but it took longer to reveal the philanthropist in Mr. George. The revelation began, doubtless, with his tolerating, nay, his welcoming of myself; but it was more noticeable to me in an exhibition of one of his pet aversions. Mr. George was a Tennessean, and his wrath sometimes overflowed upon the Tarheel. The poor mountaineer, he declared, was proud without reason, and exacting without reliability; he would work only so long as he was starving and could not get credit; he would plight his oath to do a thing for you, and straightway forget or evade his promise; he was easily persuaded, and he as easily backslid.

“ To tell you the truth,” he said one evening in a burst of candor, “ the reason I’ve dreaded to see you locate anywhere around us here is, I knew you could go down to the works and talk Bible to my men, and get two thirds of them to keep Saturday, and they’d leave me. You’d organize a flourishing church and Sabbath school and missionary society. But you leave them for three months, and then come back to Sabbath school, and you wouldn’t find a one. They’d all be down in the pit blasting rock. Well ” (in deference to my remonstrance), “ maybe not the Sabbath school superintendent, but he’d be standing around with his hands in his pockets, whistling, ‘ I Wish I Was One of the Boys Again.’ ” In fact, in Mr. George’s opinion, the mountaineer was a great deal of a child, for whom none but a paternal government would ever answer. And despite his explosions of righteous indignation, that, I discovered, was the kind of govern-

ment he was largely administering to his own men.

“ There’s that Zeb Bean,” he confided one evening, “ got a wife and six children; sick for two months this fall, and the company carried him along through it all. But when he gets well and earning again, what do you think he does? — Buys little gewgaws to hang round his children’s necks when they’re needing shoes, and runs an account at the company’s store for cornmeal and bacon, while, if he gets a dollar, he dives straight for a blind tiger. And I told him, ‘ Now, Zeb, you’ve got to let liquor alone, and you’ve got to walk straight if you don’t want to get fired.’ Comes Christmas, and Zeb pipes up for a dollar. ‘ What for?’ I says. ‘ Want to celebrate,’ he says. ‘ It’s Christmas, and I got to celebrate, ain’t I?’ ‘ You’ll celebrate by keeping sober and reducing your account,’ I told him. But what does the fellow do? Somewhere or other he gets hold of a dime, buys that much



Mountain Freighters

"Stretching in trains along the roads are seen the white-topped prairie schooners."

black powder, and fills a wagon skein with it. His slow match proves a fast one, and he blows two fingers off his right hand, and lays himself up for another six weeks. And now who's going to take care of him this time, I'd like to know? "

" O, you are, of course! " said his wife, with a quiet little laugh. Mr. George's wrath collapsed into a mellow chuckle, that bespoke repentance for his indignation, indulgence for his erring employee. " I reckon I am, " he said. For were not these the sheep, and he the shepherd?

Next morning over the frozen ground came to the door a barefooted little boy on some primary errand that I did not learn. But he was brought in to the fire, and warmed and fed and talked with, and laden for home with a basket packed by Mis' Dosia, with substantials and delicacies.

" How's your papa, son? Tell him to hurry up and get well. Tell him, ' Don't worry, everything will be all right, ' " cooed

the stern magnate of last evening. The barefooted boy was a son of Zeb.

.

In the roomy chamber where I always slept there is tacked on the wall, among other numerous ornaments, a little message in antique type, before which I stop every night, ere I blow out the light, and I read it over and over again:

“ I seek in prayerful words, dear friend,
My heart's true wish to send you,
That you may know that, far or near,
My loving thoughts attend you.

“ I cannot find a truer word,
Nor fonder, to caress you;
Nor song nor poem I have heard
Is sweeter than, God bless you!

“ God bless you! So I've wished you all
Of brightness life possesses;
For can there any joy at all
Be thine, unless God blesses?

“ God bless you! So I breathe a charm,
Lest grief’s dark night oppress you.
For how can sorrow bring you harm
If ’tis God’s way to bless you? ”

Then I can never forbear a little journey around the room in my stocking feet, stopping here to read an inscription that speaks to the heart, and there to gaze again into the eyes that surely were endowed by something higher than the painter’s brush. There is a Dutch boy in colors; there is a great medallion of a little boy and a little girl, both golden-haired; there is a quiet woodland scene, the subscription of which recalls, while its serenity repudiates, its author — “ There is a pleasure in the pathless woods.”

Just behind the shoulder of the north wall’s projection, my eyes meet the Hebrew priest’s benediction:

“ The Lord bless thee,
And keep thee:
The Lord make His face to shine upon thee,

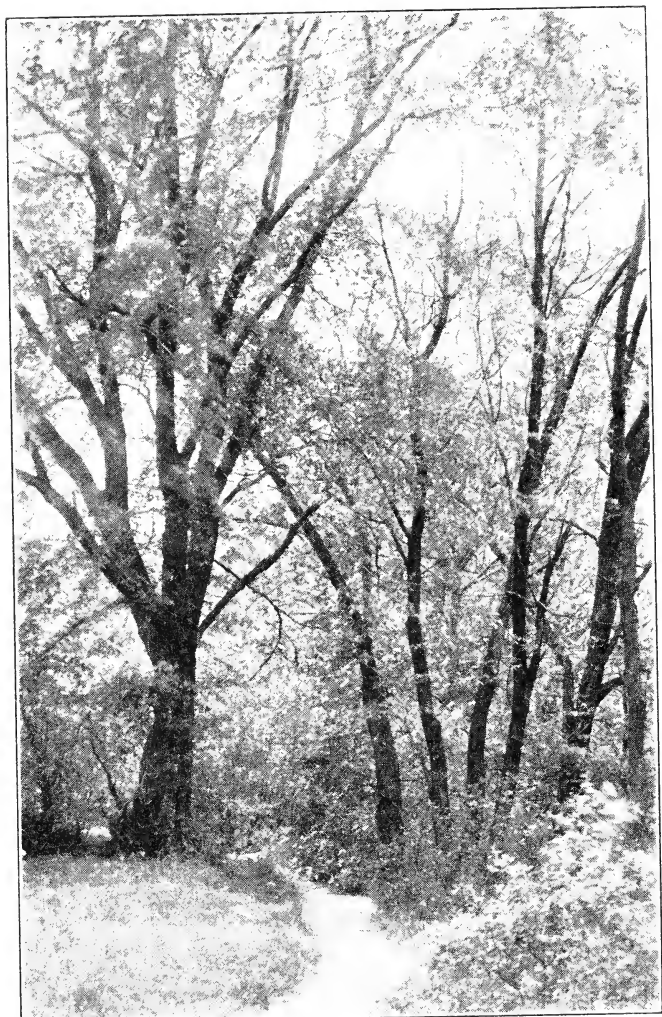


Photo by Eugene J. Hall

In and Out Among the Trees

"I fell to noting the leaves that carpeted the trail."

And be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee,

And give thee peace."

And not too far away is "The House Beautiful," which climbs its steps from faith to "Where there is God, there is no need." Sometimes I must lie upon my bed for a time before the light goes out, and take a more distant view. There, just opposite, the great emancipator broods in his rough armchair, with face and pose whose melancholy is more than relieved by their inspiration of settled will for duty. There are several pictures, beautiful, restful, of mother and babe. And there is the curious print that, close at hand, reveals a quiet fiord on the Swedish coast, with a steamer belching up a marvelous volume of black smoke that fades into whiteness toward the top; but that at a distance transforms itself into a tonsured monk, with agonized face uplifted in his devotions, or with his sheet of penciled music crumpled be-

fore him, seeking inspiration at the organ.

At last I fall asleep in the murmur of my own thoughts, repeating the benediction framed on my table:

“ Sleep sweet within this quiet room ;
Nor let, whoe'er thou art,
Rebuking thought of yesterday
Disturb thy peaceful heart.
Nor let tomorrow mar thy rest
With thought of coming ill:
Thy Maker is thy changeless friend ;
His love surrounds thee still.
Forget thyself and all the world ;
Put out each feverish light.
The stars are shining overhead !
Sleep sweet ! Good night ! Good night ! ”

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I am sitting in my armchair, reading my morning chapter, when little Miss Sis Hopkins comes down. A shy “ Good morning,” and she circles around my chair, and finally ends at the center table with her hands on a book of stories.

“Here’s this same old book we had last night.” And picking it up, she comes over to my chair. “Mamma told me not to ask you to read another story, ’cause you did read to us last night,” she says, suggestively, but adds, as an afterthought, “We can look at it, though,” and snuggles up in my lap. “What’s this?”

“Why, that’s Boblets, the meadow mouse.”

“Uh, huh!”

“Would you like to hear about him?”

“If you *want* to read, why, of course.”

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Good-by, dear House of Rest. Good-by, my friends who make its name. Outside I face again a bitter, biting wind. And my prayer for you is that in a brighter clime you may find waiting for you a more glorious Beth-shan.



Off to Market

This is not Christy, but one of Christy's kin or kith.

Christy, Kith and Kin

I SHOULD have liked to introduce you to Christy in a romantic setting; for there is romance about Christy. If I could have chosen, as the romancer can choose, the place and time for the introduction to my little highland heroine, it would have been on a glorious May morning, down at the spring, where the guarding oaks and poplars pay for their lives with their cooling shadows; and Christy, straight as a willow withe, and clad in a simple, straight-falling, homespun dress, her bare feet glistening wet with the early dews of morning, and her voice a-lilt like the lark's in a gladsome matin of the hills — but alas! it was not on a May morning, it was not at the spring, it was not in a homespun dress nor in bare feet, that I met Christy.

It was in a soggy November twilight, it was in a slab-sided lean-to kitchen, and it was in a cheap print dress, and with very neat shoes on her feet, that I first saw my little highland lass. And Christy was frying pork.

I was belated that night. I had gone two miles out of my way for a visit to this home to which I had been recommended; the fear of the strange was upon me, and my jaunty front was hiding a quaking heart as I stepped within the door and called for Mr. Page. The woman at the kneading trough (for so, in memory of Israel, I call their big, oblong wooden bread bowls) replied that he was not yet home; he had gone to Asheville to take his boy to the Farm School, but he might be back at any minute.

Then I asked if I might stay overnight. There was a visible hesitation in the reply: the woman kneaded and punched her dough, and pulled a biscuit or two from the mass,

shaped them, and put them into the pan; and I think she said something, but I do not know what, for I had begun to look at Christy, by the cookstove. There was something reassuring in her attitude, something certainly I could not hear, for she was silent; something I could not well see; but something that somehow I felt. It was a welcome, conveyed, perhaps, by the honestly curious but kindly glances she directed at me, glances that seemed to say, "You are from the great, wide, wise, outside world; I should like you for my friend." She was not bold, nor was she afraid. In her the shyness of the mountain child was minimized, the courage and independence intensified. And little does Christy know how she, in her fearless friendliness, diffused comfort in the heart of one she thought so much wiser and stronger and bolder than herself.

I did not know then how much Christy reigned a queen in her father's home; but

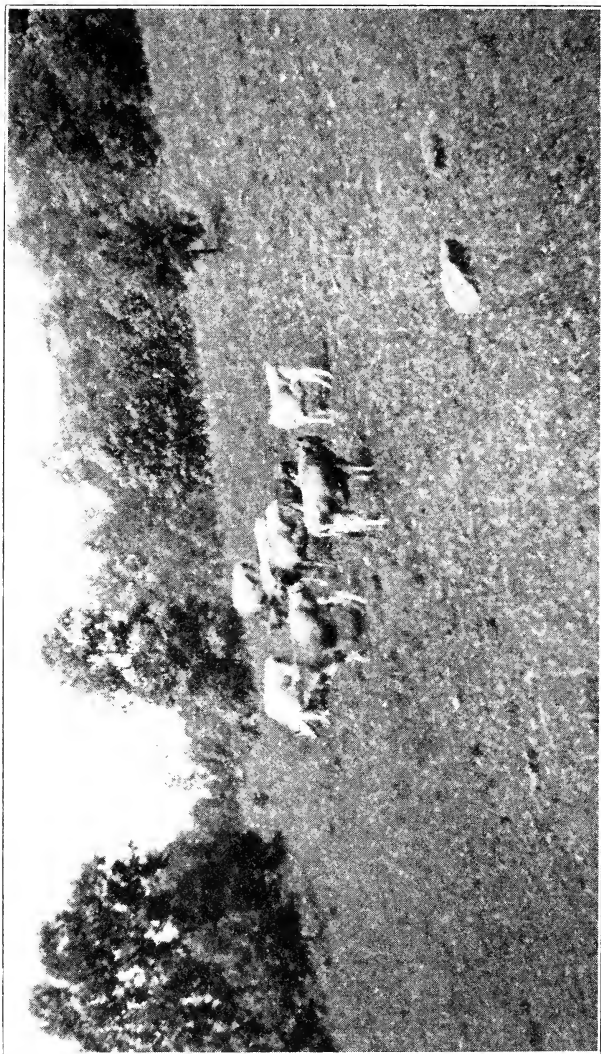
it seemed to me that somehow her sense of self-possession, and welcome, and her innocence of shame at poverty, communicated itself to her mother; for I heard at last the woman's relenting tones saying we might wait and see what Mr. Page would say. And pressing my little advantage, I got her own consent, and then a smile from Christy.

There are some children whose smiles are illuminations, sunbursts of angelic beauty. Such a one I have always to greet me when I come home; when Ronald smiles, his sober, quizzical little face is transformed into all that I know of an angel's, having in it sympathetic understanding, depth of quiet humor, the fervor of abundant and all-embracing love. And I have seen that rare smile on the faces of other children. It is not the monopoly of good children, but it does belong always to reserved children, whose silent thoughts go wandering knight-errantly through the

castles of story and the mystic forests of imagination; to them, moreover, whose spirits are warmed with the sunshine of universal brotherhood. And such was Christy's smile.

We sat that night around the open fire (for Mr. Page had quickly given his welcome to the stranger), and by its light, aided by a flaring lamp without a chimney, we talked of the coming Kingdom and the truths that are preparing a people for that Kingdom. That talk began, after some desultory conversation, upon my telling the children stories of the Bible. There were five of the children: Craig, a boy of fourteen summers, — and so older by two years than Christy, — a girl of nine, another boy of five, and the baby of two years.

Now I can never tell stories well to children unless they are in my arms or at my knee, and I sought to gather these to me. But they, except the oldest, were gathered



Out in the Pasture

“‘You take that there young Molly,’ he said; ‘she won’t kick as long as she’s eating.’”

about Christy, the baby in her arms, and scarcely could I at first detach them from their magnet. Their eyes went wide, however, with the wonder of the stories. And I watched their eyes. All but two pair of them were the usual eyes of the mountain child — the Celtic blue or the Saxon gray. Christy's were brown, so dark a brown as to be almost black, a beautiful velvety black, straight-seeing, fearless, but trustful. And now that in the fitful light I could see her features better, I marked other foreign distinctions. Her lips were redder in contrast with her darker skin; her nose had an indescribably delicate aquilinity that gave her face a touch of hauteur, which, denied by her eyes, was erased only by her rare smile. She, like the others, listened to story after story with interest, but in her face I read not merely reception, but acquisition: she would use those stories afterward. Not that the children had never heard any of them; Mr. Page

was a Baptist deacon, and the children all went to Sunday school; but the Bible has ever a freshness if it comes from the storyteller's lips.

It was plain that Christy was not only queen, but almoner of the household. "Christine" she called herself, and so her mother called her. Whether this was a new-made dignity of budding womanhood, or an arrogation of babyhood, I never knew; but to the children and their father she was still "Christy." It was Christine who put supper upon the table and cleared away the dishes and superintended the afterwork; it was Christine who was responsible for the baby; and it was Christy who found her father's pipe, braided her sister's hair, put away her little brother's hat and shoes, and, along with me that evening, wrestled with her older brother's arithmetic examples.

It was in respect to matters related to this last subject that I found the father

voluble. And so it was everywhere: the schools were "no 'count," the teachers were incompetent either in discipline or in learning, there was so much opposition to special tax that often the school could hold no more than four months; and though the district might tax itself for a long time, so dominated was the system by politics, and its victim, or tyrant, the county superintendent, that they might be cheated in the lottery of getting a teacher. But I learned to take these complaints with considerable allowance, reflecting from my own experience that the school's constituency, having a thousand eyes, often could not see with the single eye of the educator; and learning, moreover, a little of actual conditions by observation and talk with teachers. Out of my meager investigations came at last the conviction that while there is just cause for complaint about short school terms, lack of good system, and incompetence of teachers, yet the teachers,

as a whole, so far from being to blame, are the only element of hope in the situation. Various ones of them I have watched at work in the little country schoolhouses; and with but one exception, I have felt they were earnest, helpful, hopeful workers, doing better than I could do under the conditions and with the knowledge they had. The teacher body of the mountains, indeed, presents itself to me in Jacob's figure of Issachar, — "a strong ass couching down between two burdens" — the burden on the one hand of popular criticism and its own knowledge of needed improvement, and on the other of inadequate training and poverty. The teacher who is employed for only four months in the year at twenty-five or thirty dollars a month — what can he do to perfect his education? His year is broken into one third of teaching and two thirds of anything else. If he sacrifices himself for the sake of teaching school four months, for eight months he must find

whatever offers in order to support himself, and sometimes a family. He can hold no permanent position of a clerical nature, and almost his only resource is the mountain farm. He cannot afford to take a thorough normal training; or, if he does win through that, his services are in demand in more remunerative positions. So far as the public school is concerned, the prime requisite for its betterment is more money. Yet, in the comparative poverty of the country, much more per capita is devoted to school purposes than in more densely populated and wealthier communities.

This problem of the government school makes the opportunity of the private Christian school. The establishment of small self-supporting schools in these needy communities, operating under conditions like those of the people about them, and training free these children, not merely in secular knowledge but in the precious truths of the last gospel message, will be rewarded

finally with manifold the results of less permanent agencies.

It was nearly two years before I again reached Christy's neighborhood. Then, one day, I stopped at the Smoky Hollow school-house, and waited until the close of school to talk with the two teachers, husband and wife. The recitations went on, but back in the seats, among the fifty-odd pupils, I heard my name buzzing; and no sooner was school dismissed than from the group gathered about me, I heard one clear voice saying, "How are you, Mr. Spalding?" I singled out the dark-haired, clear-eyed girl who had spoken. Her features were vaguely familiar to me, but I could not place her nor speak her name. Yet in the face of that cordial greeting I was ashamed to confess my forgetfulness, and I hedged distractedly. "Why, I'm glad to see you," I said. And then some prevaricating memory told me she belonged to a family six miles away, over in Brushy Creek Valley.

“And do you come away over here to school?” I asked, to show that I was really acquainted with her. Her fine eyes clouded with a haze of disappointment. “Why, don’t you know me?” she said, “I’m Christine.”

Abashed out of my self-possession before this slip of a girl, I gasped, “O yes, indeed, I know you,” and wondered what lame explanation I might offer for the crime of forgetting Christine. I determined, wisely, to make none. “I’m going down to your house tonight,” I decided and at once declared.

Again came the flash of that rare smile. “We shall be glad to have you,” she said, with a simplicity yet with a stateliness that would have done credit to a grand dame of France. And then, on the instant, I knew whence came those eyes, that dark waving hair, that olive skin, those fine nostrils, that delicately curving nose: she was of Huguenot blood, a reversion to type that could

but faintly be traced in her mother's faded lineaments.

A few minutes afterward I overtook her and several companions on the road toward home. Her little sister and brother, with two or three other children, hung back as I slackened my pace to walk with them, but Christy stepped along by my side, with ease maintaining her part of the conversation, which the others soon eagerly joined. What did we talk of? — O whatever the road or irresponsible association of ideas suggested; holidays, and black walnuts, and stained bare legs, and school whippings, and Craig's new mule, and goldenrod, and working the road, and Michigan sleigh rides, and all such things.

“Do you like watermelon?” asked Christy.

“Yes, indeed,” I said, with a memory of the lowland Sweetheart melons with which I had but recently been surfeited.

“We have a fine one at home, down in

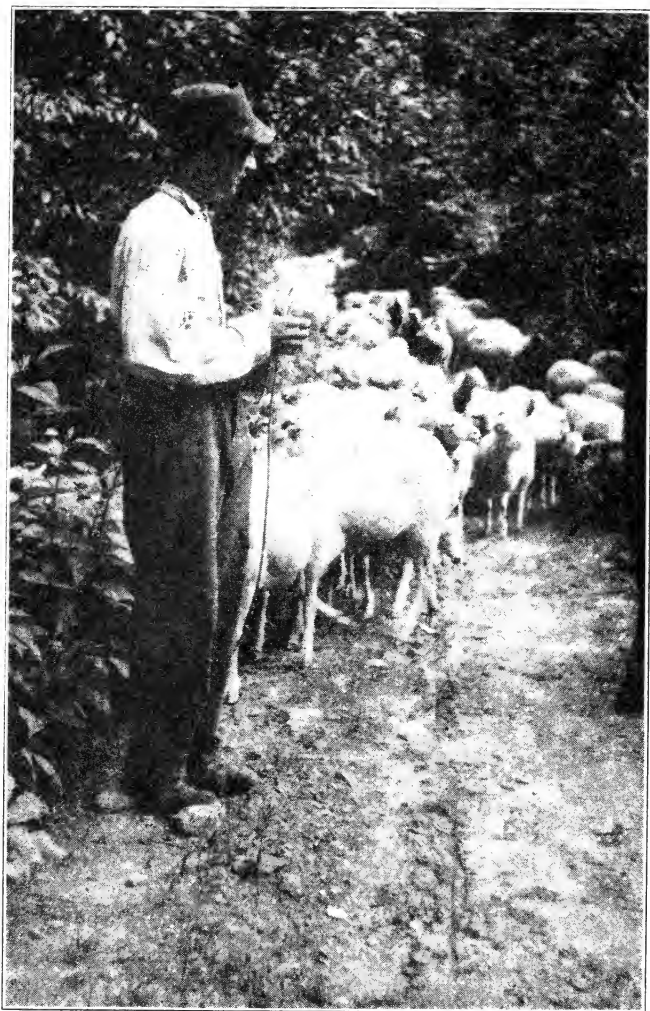
the spring house," she said, "When we get there, I'll go and cut it for you."

"Were you saving it for something?" I asked; for I knew that fine watermelons are hard to grow in the mountains.

"I think we were saving it for you," she said, and again the smile.

At the gate was Craig, going to milk. He, too, knew me, and smiled a welcome. "I'll go with you," I volunteered; and we passed back down the road to the pasture bars. Two cows with scanty udders came up for the mash that awaited them. He knelt beside one, with a quart cup in one hand, the other free to milk, after the custom of the land. "You take that there young Molly," he said, "she won't kick as long as she's eating."

Thus warned, and remembering the sarcasms of Lars at home on the subject of my slow milking, I threw away my hat, tucked my head in front of Molly's flank, and raced against fate with both hands. Short



A Mountain Shepherd

"Little enough have I said of Christy's kin. I would have told you of Richard; of Pete, dark browed under the frown of Forge Mountain."

race! Molly was not in the habit of giving more than three quarts at a milking.

“You shore can milk,” said Craig, “I never done it that-a-way.” And I stood in humble pride at the subtle compliment. “How well might Lars,” I thought, “take lessons from this gentleman.” Ah, well, blind human nature will love its flatterer rather than its critic!

That night the father was away at a lodge meeting, and my evening, begun with stories for the children, was cut in two by the retirement of the mother and the younger ones. The latter half I spent with Craig and Christy. How I enjoyed that evening! Quietly attentive, respectfully eager, they listened, and they questioned. Their schoolbooks furnished the starting-point. Out of their reader — Somebody’s Fifth, it seems to me — I picked one or two selections to read to them, until at last I came upon that Tennysonian lyric by Sidney Lanier, best-loved poet of the South:

“ SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

“ Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side,
With a lover's pain to attain the plain,
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

“ All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried, Abide, abide!
The wilful water weeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said, Stay,
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed, Abide, abide,
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.”

The wizardly beauty of the poem was enmeshing their souls, these far-away heirs of Celtic bard and Frankish troubadour;

their shining eyes were fixed upon mine whenever I raised them, until the last stanza, with its lesson of unselfish service, was completed:

“ But O, not the hills of Habersham,
And O, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call —
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main.
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn;
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o’er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.”

“ Did you ever hear Sidney Lanier’s ‘ Ballad of the Trees and the Master ’? ” I asked them. “ No; ” and so I repeated to them that simple, beautiful, wonderful little pastoral that the angels must have whispered to the gentle poet:

“ Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent;
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.

But the olives, they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him,
The thorn tree had a mind to Him,
When into the woods He came.

“ Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content ;
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last,
'Twas on a tree they slew Him — last,
When out of the woods He came.”

And then we talked. O, rare is the opportunity when a boy's heart and a girl's heart are open wide as those were then ! And I can but believe that God's Spirit was touching their hearts there in the corner by the rough old fireplace, and that some day the seed planted that night will spring up, and will bear its fruit.

But space, closing in, shows no mercy ; for I was minded to tell you of others. Little enough have I said of Christy's kin,

and nothing of kith, the great fraternity so closely tied in blood and friendship, recalling the clan of the Celt. I would have told you of Mamie, jolly, self-reliant, and capable; of the two unknown boys on Bearwallow's slopes, playing in solitude at stalking Indian or hunting bear (I could only guess at the game, for intrusion would spoil it); of Pete, dark-browed under the frown of Forge Mountain, and hungering for a "chance;" of Richard, whose rough hands would strip fodder for three days more to get the book his indifferent or frugal father refused. And ah, how many more! The children of the mountains, joyous, happy, free, are like the children everywhere, save only, perhaps, in this, that many of them know of a world outside, great, mysterious, vague, that holds a stupendous "chance;" and into all their eyes, it seems to me, has crept the yearning for that vague unknown. These are the children that I love, with the yearning, pity-

ing love a father, chained by poverty, casts unavailingly forth to the hungry ones he cannot feed. They are too many, dear Lord, for the five loaves and the two small fishes. Shall not the miracle be wrought? And among the happy ones, in Thy great day, I want to see Christy; yea, not her alone, but — Christy, kith and kin.



Nature in Her Glory

“It is a beautiful country up there under the shadow of Bearwallow Mountain.”

The Summer People

MY personal experience with "the summer people" I admit is very slight, too slight to enable me to gain or give any just appreciation of their character. A few of them I have known as guests in the home of a friend; some I have talked with here and there in my journey through the country; and one I met on the eve of her departure for home, whose efforts as a Christian worker have inclined me to the highest opinion of the class.

"Class," I said, but there are many classes among them. They are the summer *people*; in class they range from clerk to millionaire, from gentlefolk to boors. Who are the summer people? They are the ones who have made "The Land of the Sky" the playground of the nation. Serious play sometimes it is, with stakes of life and

death; for the bracing air and the beautiful hills and the glorious skies have called to the ill in body and mind to come and learn to live. And again, the play is mere dawdling, the listless search of the unhappy idle for a new condiment to put zest into life.

I can never forget a simple scene one day, up on Brushy Creek. It is a beautiful country up there under the shadow of Bear-wallow Mountain, a land and a sky that ought to call with the Maker's voice to the sick in mind. And I had a book that spoke the Master's interpretation of nature, the glad and the serious lessons of the sower and the reaper; that used the lure of fisherman and merchantman to limn the pictures of heaven; that spoke to the bride and the bridegroom and the bridegroom's friend. The gladness and the seriousness of the book were in my heart; for I had told them many times.

I was passing over familiar ground; for I had been this way before, but not when

the summer people were there. As I came around a turn of the road by Jeff Nichol's new house, I saw a group upon the lawn close to the side of the road. There was a little daughter of the household, a knickerbockered boy, a young woman in white, and an older woman, perhaps forty. Forty had been her years, but she was old, old with the woe that centuries have perfected. I greeted them. The younger woman bowed, a little superciliously; the older woman let her eyes fall. They offered no objection to hearing me tell of the book, beyond the statement that they did not wish to consume my time to no purpose.

But as I talked and turned the pages, I watched them. The mocking eyes of the young woman in white at times grew luminous with sympathy, the sunshine and clouds of new emotions and old passions flitting back and forth across her face. But the older woman sat immobile, her countenance expressive of settled gloom. Her fea-

tures had once been handsome, beautiful perhaps, but in them now I read the records of wasted energies, disappointed hopes, weariness of life. Twice only she lifted her eyes to mine; they were dark, blue like the twilight sky, but dark, dark with the pencilings of brow and lashes, darker with the lines of care and dissipation, darkest with a mental gloom that I shrank from looking into. She said no word; she left to others comment and answer. Bright sunshine of thought or lightning flash of warning from the book, alike left her unchanged. For the most part, her eyes were fixed on the distant hills, until, as I watched her, from the background of my thoughts there came to stand out clear and distinct, as though caught from her face, certain words I had read: "Men sat unsolaced, and with longing eyes looked for the coming of the Deliverer."

The group were waiting for the postman. He came before I left. The letters, eagerly

hailed by the younger ones, were listlessly fingered by the older woman, and passed with a monosyllable or two. I went on my way with a grief in my heart that could not be spoken, a wondering grief that craved to know its cause, and was met only by the sphinx of the somber-eyed, unsolaced woman. She was one of the summer people.

I stopped next day for dinner with friends, where I had stayed overnight more than once two years before. Their home, a simple farmhouse, was overflowing with visitors from the lowlands. The tall, white-bearded, grave man who was the head of the house, took his pipe from his mouth to speak his welcome, along with his open hand; two of the sons came forth to greet me; and the mother, busy in the kitchen where I found her, turned with hearty welcome to "Brother Spalding."

The summer people were everywhere: rustic seats, shady arbors, croquet grounds, held many of them; and on the veranda

many more, young and old, were busy with magazines and cards. The card game was interrupted by the host just long enough to permit introductions; it could not wait another minute. The magazines, dog-eared and dirty, were evidently doing unhappy service until they should be relieved by later numbers. A little group of four or five persons, however, appeared to have no special interest; and after brief conversation, I offered to show them my book.

A flickering interest showed in several faces. What kind of book was it? One tall man (whom all the rest called "professor") peered over my shoulder while he exclaimed, "What's the name of it? 'Christ's Object Lessons!'" That's enough for me!" and betook himself in haste, with his newspaper and cigar, to the other end of the porch. But, evidently fearing he had been hasty, possibly discourteous, he added from his safe distance, "Not that I mean any offense; it's all right for those who

want that kind of matter; but I'm not interested. Show it to the ladies."

For the first time in my experience, I felt indignation rising, not because of boorishness shown toward myself, but at the thought that a teacher (one who, as I afterward learned, was the head of the city schools in one of our States' capitals) should be so ignorant of true education as to despise the words of the Master of his profession. But I would have scorned to allow an echo of his spirit. I turned to the ladies, courteous and kindly, who listened well, but appreciated little.

At dinner I sat at one end of the table, in close proximity to several young persons, who, boisterous enough before, seemed to feel an oppressive shyness after the "saying of grace," which the dear, good, motherly Methodist hostess had called for from "Brother Spalding." Yet we talked together pleasantly enough of common things, innocuous if not highly edifying, and there

was a pretty grace in the young girls' voices and manners, and a pleasing gallantry in even a twelve-year-old youngster who threw a delicate but robustly boyish compliment to his hostess's daughter. My heart went out to them, treading with thoughtless confidence the social path their elders were marking out for them, even as their feet had unquestioningly followed, the day before, the trail their guide had taken up Bearwallow's steep slopes. Immediately after dinner they were dancing in the hall in front with an orchestra composed of a very good piano and an execrable French harp which gallant Mr. Twelve-year-old would persist in playing.

There were twenty or thirty persons there, but not one of them (aside from the native family) had, so far as I could discover, a serious thought for this day or eternity's day. They were summer people bent on pleasure; their motto, "While we live, let us live."

It would be manifestly unjust to brand all the summer people with the unfavorable impression such an experience begot, even though there were other experiences that deepened it. True culture certainly I have met in nearly all of the few others with whom I have had a longer acquaintance. Men and women of serious mind and earnest purpose I have met here in the mountains, from various Southern States — clergymen, teachers, nurses, and others who have deep interests, and I must believe, consecrated lives, at their homes. I feel the glow of warmth in the memory of one lady from New Orleans whom I met at a Bible class the evening before she left for home.

The Bible class was one formed by herself for the training of Sunday school teachers. She had attended the local Sunday school during her vacation, but had been asked to teach, had felt the great need of better methods than were there used, and

had invited her class and any others who wished, to take up the Sunday School Union's systematic training course for teachers. Whether her manners were offensive to the simple leaders, or whether it was (as they claimed) her theology which troubled them, I do not know; but it seems she speedily found herself the center of one of those experiences of which Saxe writes feelingly —

“To be mixed in parish stirs
Is worse than handling chestnut burs.”

She was said to be an Episcopalian, but the textbook she was using, I discovered, was published by another church. At any rate, this woman had gathered about her from the Sunday school a little class, — some very intelligent, others more backward, — and had trained them well in the work they were doing. Every week on Wednesday evening she met them in the schoolhouse, and patiently and enthusiastically drilled them in reasons for their

faith and in Bible history and geography, and now was about to begin upon principles of teaching. Her work had been well done, as her class showed in review, and it was a grief to me, that because of early removal myself, I could not accept her and their invitation to continue the work after her departure. She was one of the summer people, bent, not upon pleasure, but upon working for God. And, whether tactfully or not, she had been endeavoring to use her talent and her vigorous personality in service for Christ.

But observation compels the belief that the majority of the summer people are neither religious nor philanthropic. They have come here for rest, recreation, and pleasure. Their influence upon the mountaineer is by no means highly beneficial. He has long been out of the current of the world's progress; he is a century, two centuries, behind the times. In some respects it is a favor and a credit to be behind these

times. The enterprise and capital of modern America might be employed in the development of the mountains with advantage to the mountaineer, but the wealth they have made for their possessors is little blessing when brought into the mountains to minister solely to pleasure.

The tourist, of course, may not consciously debauch his simple mountain brother. He may even have an amused, tolerant interest in him; but the tender mercies of the idle rich are cruel. The contrast in standards of living, from pinched poverty to free-handed plenty, from honest and poorly paid toil to opulent leisure, has a demoralizing effect upon the mountaineer. And when he finds himself able, by the multiplication of sleeping places and the slaying of many chickens, to coax from the pockets of the visitors in a few weeks more money than he has seen for many years, he is confronted with a great temptation to make himself into the

servant, the lackey, despised by his forefathers, who fled to the mountains that they might make their sons independent and free. The roads, after three hundred years, have followed the truants to the mountains, and are paving a golden way back to the halls of service.

And when the mountaineer gets his view of the times, not through the effort and the business of the great world, but through its relaxation, which is too often its dissipation, he is not enlisted in its worthy ranks of industry, but rather sucked into its train of parasitic camp followers.

Nevertheless, the Christian worker, who is no social providence, but simply a savior of souls, must hail the advent of the summer people as another field for his efforts. They make, it is true, no consciously needy charge. The service for which they ask is mostly temporal and little spiritual; they would patronize rather than be converted. Nevertheless, both because they

complicate the problem of helping the mountaineer, and because they also have sin-sick souls, they do present a field for Christian effort. And though unconscious, their appeal is not the less a challenge to the Christian to be at his work. The mountain worker, joining hands with what helpful forces he may find among the visitors, must work for them as well as for his native people. And he may even find in this effort a wider, though it cannot be a nobler service; for the truth that finds lodgment with the summer people may be spread throughout the country and throughout the year.

The fact that all this mountain country fills up yearly with tourists and health seekers from almost every part of the Union, is a challenge to find and use the best means, all possible means, to reach their various classes.

As Capernaum, with its caravans, offered Christ an opportunity He did not neg-

lect, to make Himself known to far-distant parts, so "The Land of the Sky" offers an opportunity to send the last message near and far. And by what means did Jesus call attention to the truth? Cannot His methods suggest a possible way here?

My thoughts turn back to the sad-faced woman by the roadside, pass over the light, giddy throng that comes between, and settle at last into an assurance that there is a healing of mind and soul and body that the pilgrims to this land are craving. And, influenced by these thoughts, I catch in fancy even here the echo of those words spoken in that city on the sea, "I will; be thou clean;" "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise;" and, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."



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Beauty, Beauty, Everywhere!

"Water in plenty there is in the mountains, from bubbling springs to garden plots of white water lilies and cattails."

The Lake Country

“ I RECKON hit air purty,” said Cal Strong, courteously. He stretched a long leg toward the fire, then suddenly withdrew it and leaned forward to bathe his brown, hairy hands in the warmth of the fireplace. “ I reckon hit shore air purty; ” then, after an interval, again, “ I reckon hit air.”

Plainly it was time for me to come to the rescue: Cal's rhetoric had failed at the extreme limit of his imagination. I had foolishly been expatiating upon an unfamiliar, yea, an unimaginable subject. But if there had been no excuse, there had at least been a reason. Reasons, sometimes, we must all admit, are poorer sticks to lean on than excuses. So it was tonight. If Cal had given me any excuse for telling

him unattractive tales about blue waves wimpling in the fairy breezes, about boating and bathing, and sailing and skating and ice yatching, and bob fishing and duck hunting, — ah, possibly that was the clue; for Cal had been yielding reminiscences of hairbreadth escapes from bear and copperhead.

But behind that doubtful excuse lay the reason. A lake-country boy, I had sought in vain in the beauties of forest and hill for the final touch, the acme of perfection — the blue lake. Water in plenty there is in the mountains, from bubbling springs and laughing rills to cascades and flowing rivers, with now and then a garden plot of white water lilies, or of cat-tails where the redwing flutes; yet, like the homesick Greek, I had to cry, "But where is the sea?"

"I don't suppose," I said to Cal, by way of changing the subject, "I don't suppose you-all need any lakes up here, though.

You have so much of everything else that belongs to heaven, that one more gift would make men blaspheme because they had to die."

"I reckon so," said Cal, pleased, perhaps, at the compliment, if he understood it. But, modestly deprecatory, he added, "The pneumony air mighty bad, though." Then, as an unimportant afterthought he added, "But we-all hev lakes, too."

"Where?" I exclaimed incredulously. It was as if an Atahualpa had said to a Pizzaro, wondering at his childish passion for yellow metal, "As for that, we have gold mines a-plenty."

Never say that the Anglo-Saxon stock has not the dramatic instinct; or was it a strain of the Celt in Cal that caused him, after an amused glance at my eager, questioning face, to pause for a distinct minute, to aim an amber jet accurately at the tip of old Gordie's nose on the hearthstone, to shift his quid to the other side, then, with

a sidelong glance to assure himself that the tide of impatience was at its flood, to interrogate me thus: "I reckon you-all hev heard of Toxaway? and Fairfield? and Sapphire? and Osceola? and Kanuga?"

"I'm very new to the country," I confessed, uncomfortably wondering what reparation, in the code of the mountains, one gentleman should offer another for speaking, out of a vast ignorance, in disparagement of the resources of that other's country.

"Them's lakes," said Cal. "Ef you want to *see* 'em, I kin tell you whar they be, though I never taken a ja'nt that-away myse'f."

And now, gentle reader, that I have seen, I shall describe, that lake country of "The Land of the Sky;" for I do not share the contempt of Mr. Cal Strong, though I have become a mountaineer. And in this I am not outlandish; for I find that neither do those highlanders who dwell near the

lakes, share the prejudice or the indifference of Mr. Cal Strong and his lakeless congeners, but they are not a little proud of the distinction the lakes confer upon them.

The lake country at present lies between parallels $35^{\circ} 10'$ and $35^{\circ} 30'$, and meridians $82^{\circ} 20'$ and $83^{\circ} 10'$, though, for a reason that may at last appear, these may not be the ultimate bounds of the lake country. Of anything so limpid, so cerulean, so enchanting, as a lake, I do not like to give the metes and bounds, to fix its local habitation, and lay it down in the guidebooks. Commend to me, rather, Poe's irresponsible and untraceable geography —

“Down by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir.”

But I give these facts of latitude and longitude as a concession to the demands of the modern scientist, who is so apt to accuse the poet and the nature lover of fiction.

In my boyhood I lived in all the famous lake regions of the earth: in Michigan and Maine, in Caledonia and Erin, in Saskatchewan and the basins of the West, in Westmoreland, in Switzerland, and on those shores in the Dark Continent that border on the Mountains of the Moon. In some of these I lived in person, in others by the proxy of books. With the *voyageur* and the trapper I had paddled through the spruce-lined roadways of the North; with the Incas I had shouted against those mailed robbers who gazed over the waters of Titicaca upon the golden temple of the sun; I had beached the boats and braved the kings and built the shops on Nyanza, with Speke and Stanley and Mackay; I had sprung with Tell from the barge of the tyrant Gessler, and had manned with Arnaud the boats on Lake Lemman that ushered in "The Glorious Return." And I had lived in the bright days and the dim nights that dwelt of old on Galilee —

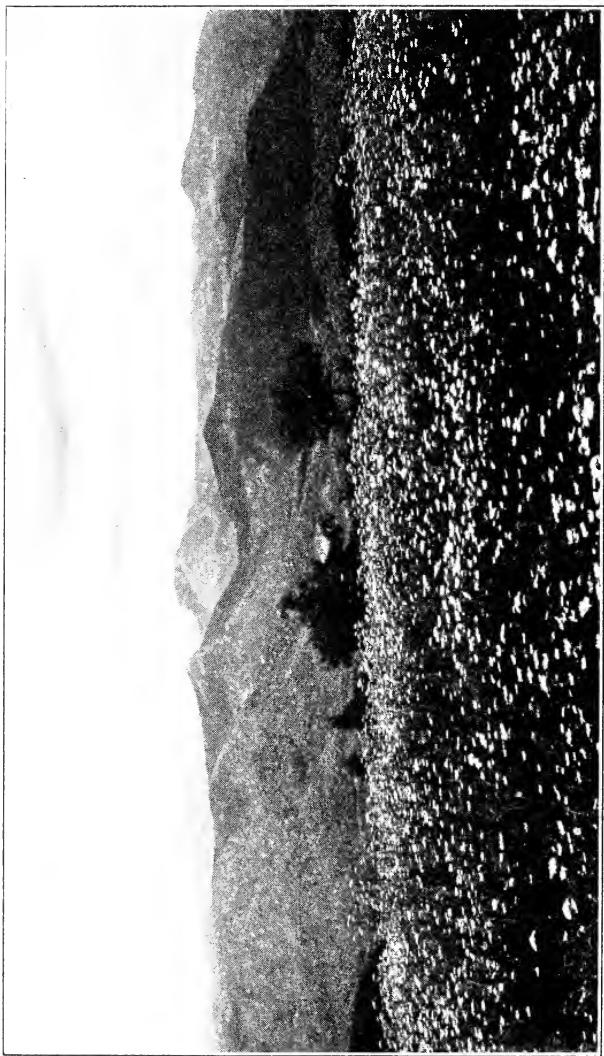
“ When Peter, girding his fisher’s coat,
Went over the nets and out of the boat,
To answer, ‘ Lovest thou Me? ’ ”

But of all the countries and all the scenes that may claim relationship to the lake country of the American highlands, for me the lochs and firths of old Scotland hold first place; because, firstly, they lie in a land that is girt by hills, and seamed with glens, and shrouded sometimes with mists (howbeit it hath not the sun of this land); and lastly, because their people are our people, and their God our God. Not alone in Glen Alpine, but also in the coves of Chunn and MacGillivray, does the shrill whistle of a Roderick Dhu call the clansmen to the gathering; and not alone in the free kirks of Dumfries and on the marshes of the Clyde, but also in the log churches and on the circuit of the itinerant preacher in the American highlands, is raised the voice that demands the law and that chants the song of freedom. For the blood of the

Highlander and the Covenanter runs in the veins of these Americans, and whatever of Huguenot and English Dissenter have mingled therewith, has been inoculated anew by the elixir of the hills. And it is my hope, as I think it may not unreasonably be my expectation, that in these fastnesses of rock and hill and lake, shall be held to the end, amid the reel and the shock of the last great battle for truth — shall be held with the fervor of a Knox, the fortitude of a Macbriar, and the broad, calm leadership of a Chalmers — the faith that requires and that makes heroes.

It was on a Sunday morning that, kissing the wife and bairns good-by, the writer set off with Lars for the upper lakes. Forty miles along the French Broad and its headwaters, our engine pulled us gallantly, though at the end, it is true, wheezing and sniffing and backing and bucking against the steep grade that presents the last barrier to Lake Toxaway.

We saw through the trees the gleam of blue water, and hastened to alight and start toward the lake. There in the midst of her green hills she lay, broad and bright, and smiling in the sunshine; for Toxaway is the queen of the mountain lakes. Some of them, I confess, I have been tempted, despite their charm of clear waters and gently caressing wavelets, to dismiss from the catalogue of lakes, because of their trifling size; but Toxaway, even though belittled by her surrounding mountains, is really a lake. Twenty-four miles must one tramp if he would go around her, and, at that, a twenty-four miles that do not lie in the compass of every day's march. For while green meadows and lovely dales and open woods cluster around and cling to her like gentle maids and loving children, behind her tower, like stanch men-at-arms, Big Hogback, and Little Hogback, and Cold Mountain, and Panthertail. (How the crude Saxon loves to slap his side of bacon



Mt. Toxaway

“Far out over the crowded heights and through their gaps, we gazed.”

down upon the fair linen of poesy! Hog-back against Toxaway! Cannot some one soften it into Gaelic or Cherokee?)

I led Lars around the road to a huckleberry hill at the end of the lake, where we sat down to feast. My eyes were hungry for expanses of blue, for the shades of indigo and green and purple, and the clear white, of a deep lake; keen for the lights and shades, for the playing of the waters with the wind—the little ripples that coquette with the wandering breeze, and the whitecaps that greet the boisterous wind. To gaze at the mingled coloring of the dark banks and green trees and the azure of the sky in the ultramarine of the lake, was food to my hungering senses then.

But Lars insisted that feasting had some reference to substantials, and I allowed him to open the lunch. Lars is a man of wisdom in things in which I am a fool. He can discourse learnedly upon hackney

and Percheron, on sweeny and spavin and poll evil, on point and pedigree; and in woodcraft he is past master, from the art of the lumberjack to the knowledge and skill of the builder. And so it comes about that to Lars the cattle upon a thousand hills signify so many hundreds of gallons of milk and so much per pound upon the hoof, and the trees that tower toward heaven lack only so many board feet of making a complete house. These subtleties of computatious imagination are beyond me, and I must be content with no more than appreciation of the broad piety they inspire. "The Lord made the earth and reckoned out its fulness," quoth Lars; "how thankful we should be that the forests will not give out before the Lord comes."

"Do you notice," I say to Lars, "that color scheme of the woods across the bay? The blue fades off into the reflection of the grassy bank. Those sourwoods above and

dwarfed dogwoods below deepen the green not too much to spoil the contrast of the dark hemlocks above."

"Hemlock's getting scarce," says Lars. "Pine has gone soaring the last fifteen years, because the Wisconsin and Michigan supply is giving out; and hemlock, which took its place, is beginning to climb now. That clump of hemlock over there is worth a lot of money, if its owner had enterprise enough to cut it, float it across the lake to the railroad, and ship it out."

"Enterprise and ownership often fail to combine," I solaced him. "If I were the owner now, I should not have the enterprise to chop down those trees; and if I had the enterprise, I hope I should not be the owner."

Toxaway was in one of her moods. When we arrived, her fair face was smiling with sunshine, but now the air was growing thick with haze, and even as we sat there, the far end of the lake was hidden

under a scudding squall. We took up our burdens, and prepared to move forward, for we had a sixty-mile tramp ahead of us, and the farther we anticipated evil weather, the better would be our journey.

Around a twist of the road, we came out upon the embankment that confines the waters of the lake within the valley. For here it must be confessed of Toxaway, as of all the lakes of the mountain country, that they are made by the hand of man. In the Southern Appalachians there are no natural lakes, though such pools as Lulu on Lookout Mountain have received that name. But when a hundred-yard dam between projecting hills can create such a lake as Toxaway, neglect to throw it across is a reproach to the genius of the hills. Nowhere, perhaps, is the opportunity better or more frequent than here in the "hills o' Ca'liny" for the easy construction of lakes that rival in charm the best of Scotland or of Switzerland. And who

cares whether the cause be the ancient forces of nature, or the recent exertions of man! Out on the blue expanse the waves roll just as lustily; deep in the narrow straits and inlets the water weeds uplift their graceful forms, and the fishes play in the shallows, just as well as if their home had been there four thousand years. Long life to the new lakes of the mountain country, and (since there can) may there be many more of them!

Eight miles farther on our way lies the winding, serpentine Lake Sapphire, which, since it needs it, has received the laudations of its friends to a greater extent than have its more worthy companions. "The beautiful Sapphire country" was a phrase that had rung in my ears for many months; and for that beauty I now sought as we trudged along.

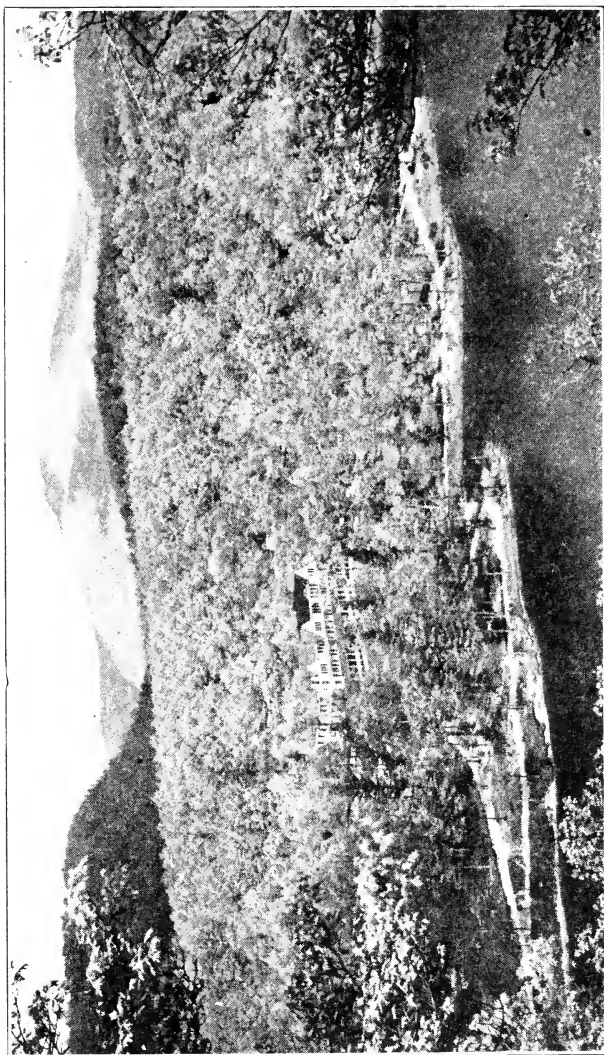
But Sapphire and its country were unfortunate that day. Scarcely had we left Toxaway before the storm clouds emptied

themselves upon us; and, drenched with rain and clodded with mud, we alternately trudged with dogged wills, and rested in puddles by the wayside for a breathing spell. Occasionally the thick clouds would lighten, but only to crowd closer together again, until at last, seeing they could not utterly prevent our progress, they gave it up as we neared the new waters; and with some feelings of gratitude we came upon Lake Sapphire and its village. For Sapphire shares with the lower Kanuga the distinction of being a club lake, with neat cottages upon its banks and an outpost of civilization in the form of a crossroads store.

The lake itself, though viewed under a somewhat favoring sky, was disappointing. Narrow and winding, it looked like a great blue serpent lying there, and to my view (biased, perhaps, by the untoward circumstances of the day) it needed all the boasts of its friends to give it rank among its

fellows. But one crown of beauty it did have. Hidden away in an inlet, around the bend of a high bank, lay anchored out in the very center, a fleet of snow-white lilies. I blessed the little lake for the joy of its one beauty, and took up with Lars the journey that meant more drenchings.

From "the beautiful Sapphire country" we began an uphill journey. The last of the trio of lakes, Fairfield, lies a thousand feet above Sapphire, and the road is not too good. Especially was this so, as by some mischance, perhaps through taking a cut-off path, we found we had selected "the old road," which runs, sometimes a mere trail, over steeper grades and stonier ways than the lower highway. We thought, indeed, we must have lost our way when the almost trackless path led us into a barnyard, where an ancient shed stuck out one corner to the very wheel ruts, like the shoulder of an interfering half-back.



Lake Fairfield

“The last of the trio of lakes, Fairfield, lies a thousand feet above Sapphire.”

It was time to inquire, and I opened a gate and went up to the house, a ramshackle building whose only evidence of life was a lazy blue curl of smoke from the stone chimney. For a minute or two my rapping brought no response. There was a hush like that of death within. But at last persistence was rewarded: the door creaked open an inch, and the suspicious face of a girl was thrust into the crack.

My smile must have reassured her that I was no revenue officer, for she threw the door open wide, to reveal a woman, hastily pinning a loose wrapper about her as she stumbled forward, followed by three or four more curious children. When they found we only wanted to know the way, they became voluble in explanations, and urgently asked us inside. If it had not been for that burdening fifty miles before us, I should gladly have accepted the invitation, for I was curious to know the cause of that hushed reception. But with thanks

for the directions given, Lars and I pressed down the stony road.

Fortune favors the brave. Just as we came to a maze of crossroads, a mile farther on, we were overtaken by two curtained carriages, whether stage or private, we cared not to know. With the main object of learning our way, but also with a faint hope of being invited to ride, we stopped the foremost and asked for the road to the lake. The young, black-haired, black-eyed driver surveyed us with evident disapproval.

“Which lake?” He thought we might be going back to Toxaway.

“Lake Fairfield.”

“Straight ahead!” said he, and himself drove straight ahead. We surmised that he was bound thither himself, and followed meekly as the two vehicles dashed down the hill, a crowd of young people in the hindermost shouting and screaming with laughter.

The rain was only occasional now, and we tramped on with sturdy hearts. Here began the steepest part of the road, a part which was to last till we reached the higher ground on which lies Fairfield. Very soon we overtook the laboring horses of the hindmost vehicle, and before another half mile had been traced, we came upon the first carriage, whose taciturn driver had met his Waterloo. He had blocked his wheels, and was tugging at the harness. A trace had broken. With the idea of giving comfort if not help, I hailed him cheerfully, "Broken down, have you?"

"We have," he said precisely, and turned his bent back to us.

I perceived at once that I was dealing with no Tarheel. No inhabitant of the hills would be so studiously, politely disrespectful. And he was no Yankee, for his fingers moved too unskilfully. Perhaps he was from Charleston, I thought, remembering the story an Ashevilleian had told me:

Miss Charleston was visiting her friends in North Carolina, and endeavored to inform their ignorance as to the strata of society in the Palmetto State. "To be accepted without question at home," she said, "one must be from the city. Which city? There is only one. If a person is introduced as being from the city, it is Charleston; the rest of the State is the country."

"But how do you introduce one who is from outside the State?" her friends asked.

"Oh, my dears," said she, "in that case we are too polite to mention it!"

And yet, when I came to reflect upon it, I was ready to find a home for my friend, the black-eyed driver, in the one city that is more exclusive still; for his action accorded more fully with the code held by a Boston blood, in the recent street-car strike in that city. A pedestrian was striding along, in a hurry to reach his down-town

office, when he was accosted by the driver of a powerful car that slid up to the curb beside him.

“ I say, my dear fellow, were you going down town? ”

“ Yes.”

“ May your name be Smith? ”

“ Jones, sir.”

“ Are you not related to the Kirby-Smiths in any way? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ You have no cousins among them? ”

“ None that I know of.”

“ And you have no acquaintance in their set? ”

“ I don't know them.”

“ Ah, well, I beg your pardon,” sighed the young man, “ I thought I might give you a lift in my car, but of course if you have no connections, it is impossible.” And his motor purred him away.

In this case, however, we left the mule motors purring at a standstill, while we shot

on ahead. Up, up, up, steeper and wilder grew the way. The deciduous trees gave way to pines, and then to great hemlocks, magnificent in girth and height, filling the narrow gulches and towering over our heads along the road.

They who go to Fairfield go through grandeur to come to somber glory. For that little lake, lying in the embrace of the great mountains about her, is the very personation of the weird conception of Poe's:

“ The skies they were ashen and sober,
The leaves they were crisped and sere —
The leaves they were withering and sere ;
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year.
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir,
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.”

It may be the sun shines sometimes upon this crystal gem of a lake, and it may be it transforms it into brightness, but not so

was it on that day when we stood there. The skies were ashen and sober, and the little lake, perfect in its rounded beauty as the full form of a maiden, was clasped round by the somber forests and the mountains behind that sprang from its very surface. Had I had the christening of this lake, I would have called her Persephone, so queenly did she sit in these dark realms of Pluto.

Towering up in its noble or its ugly grandeur, from the far side of the lake sprang a thousand feet into the air the great, bold, curving forehead of Bald Rock. Scarcely a sprig of green, caught in some crevice, was there to be seen on his gaunt gray surface. Though other mountains, higher than himself, rose around him, Bald Rock, the sinister genius of the place, impressed his personality upon his fellows, and dominated the scene. We stood there at mid-day, and watched the dim shadows coloring the waters of the pool, while imagination

caught the morning's scene, when the mists
uprise to wave their incense smoke before
the face of Old Baldy, and the night's,
when the last splendors of the sunset glo-
rify the shameless rock while the shadows
in contrast lie deeper upon the tarn be-
neath. For the first time I stood in Poe's
world, and with me ever I shall carry in
a glow of love, where once was only fear,
the memory of

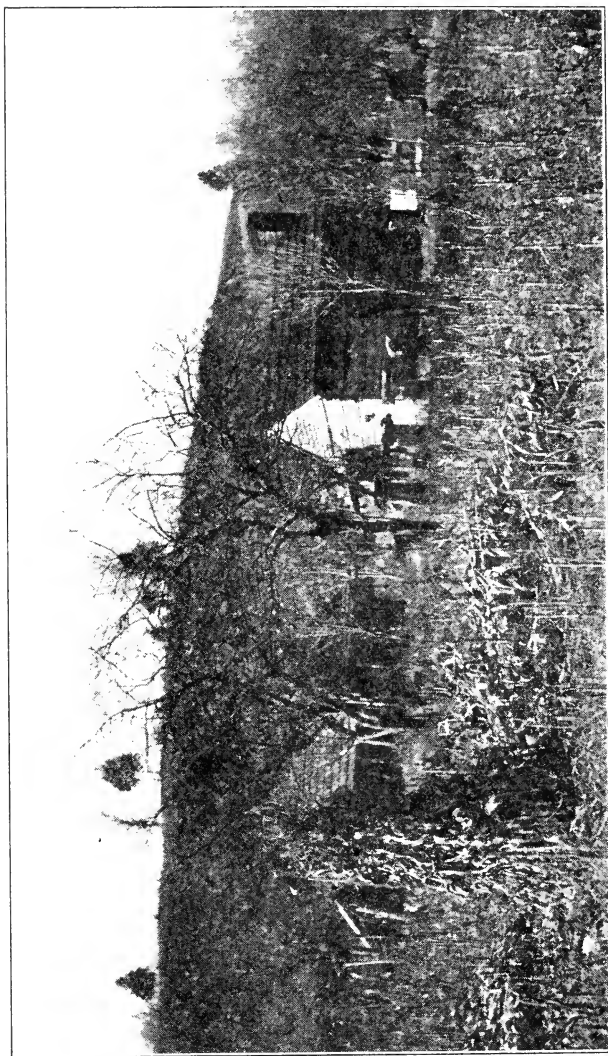
“ . . . the dim lake of Auber

In the misty mid region of Weir.”

For though we left it, the lake and its
massive guardians followed us. All up
the steep way that came thereafter, our
hearts bore the impress of that picture;
and when, after two hours of upward
winding and toiling, which Lars insisted
meant ten miles, we came out upon an emi-
nence and beheld over against us, and
seemingly nearer than before, the great
bare face of Old Baldy, it would have taken

little to convince us that we had been still wandering "in the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

Far out over the crowded heights, and through their gaps, we gazed. Here just below us lay beautiful little Fairfield, crouched at the feet of her giant lords; there to the right wound the sinuous Sapphire; and far away to the east stood the mountains, Panthertail and Hogback, guarding Toxaway, queen of the waters. We stood at the back door of the land; lingering a moment before we should go on into the wilderness, we let our eyes wander over the way our feet had so laboriously trodden; and, because we had loved in the time we had lived, it was with a feeling of sadness as well as with a memory of joy that we bade farewell to the lake country of the "Land of the Sky."



“Home, Sweet Home”

“A little mountain farm, with a cabin home, was their all.”

Children of the Rechabites

“THEY are children of the Rechabites,” said Brother Marshall, as we stood watching, in the group of children out hoeing the corn, a young woman of eighteen and her pair of brothers, two and four years younger, “they are children of the Rechabites. What their father taught them before he died, they would no more think of wilfully disregarding now than of giving up their lives.”

I was interested in these children because I had had a little hand in helping them along the road, though I had not before seen them. And now, at the commendation of their teacher, with the Scriptural picture it evoked, my heart warmed toward them anew.

Now Jonadab, their father, long years before, having come from a godless family,

was not a Christian, yet he was of a serious cast of mind. And having taken as wife a maiden whose piety was deep and strong, he learned from her and from her godly father, how to find the peace that passes all understanding. And together these two dedicated their children, one by one as they were born, to the cause of Christ. They were not rich; far from it. A little mountain farm of thirty acres, with a cabin home, was their all; and their few years of married life were spent in toil and frugal living. The mother sickened and died when Lucy, the eldest, was but five years of age, and the baby, Robert, was scarcely weaned.

“I don’t remember my mother much,” Lucy said to me, “except her blue eyes, and when she kissed my father. But I think she taught him to be a Christian. Always, after she died, he would gather us children, morning and night, and read the Bible to us, and teach us to pray.”

Alone for most of the years, Jonadab trained his children in the love of God and in the habits of industry. He was with them till Lucy was twelve years old, and Leonard and Robert were boys who had begun to shoulder the burdens of the farm. During the last year (for he saw his death creeping upon him) he doubled his efforts to impress right principles on his children's minds. He taught them always to study the Bible and to pray to God for whatever they needed. He told them they must never give up the effort to get an education. And he warned them never to go to the mills to work. He had a sister in one of the South Carolina cotton mills, and he knew the reasons for commanding his children never to yield to the attraction of those burning lamps of ready wage that so attract the impecunious mountain moth.

But when he was dead, his father took the children. I do not think his name was Rechab. Unworthy at least he was to be

the father of such a son, because he had not a soul that could rise above his daily food and plenty of chewing tobacco and leisure. Unworthy, I said? Yet, had he come also into the fortune of such a wife as was his daughter-in-law, or had the messenger of God come as he should into his early home, who knows but he might have been the worthy progenitor of the children of the Rechabites?

But Lucy, Leonard, and Robert were to him only three hungry mouths to feed, three insistent backs to cover and heads to shelter, with what credit might be induced from three pairs of hands that the hard taskmaster, Poverty, had taught to labor. His little farm bore small fruit to his indifferent labor; and so it came about that he listened when his daughter-of-the-mills insisted, "Why should you have to work for them children, when they could be earnin' money for you? Bring 'em down to the mills."

And so at last he told the children that they should "go south." But they remembered their father's command, and contended for it earnestly. "Every morning," said Lucy, "I would beg grandpa not to take us to the mills, for our father had said we should not go; and every night we prayed about it." But the old man, with the prospect of leisure and ready money from his grandchildren's labor, would not listen, and he carried them off to the mill country.

Three years they were there, yet not long in any one place; for, like most of the mill people, the old man had the moving mania. He would hear, perhaps, the rumor of some mills fifty miles away that paid higher wages, and he would prepare to move; and move he would, against the protestations of his granddaughter. "I knew we could never get along well by moving constantly," she said to me, "and we always found that if there were higher

wages, there were also higher prices in the company stores, where we had to trade our scrip."

The old man did not work, but the children did; that is, the two older ones; for the youngest was too much under age to attempt to dodge the child-labor law. It was not hard work they had to do, but it was deadening to mind, and through its monotony fatiguing to the body, destructive of that elasticity which is the main-spring of growing youth. The mill child suffers from vacuum rather than weight.

Every day the sister prayed, and she taught her brothers to pray, that God would let them go back to the mountain country and to the farm. And at last the prayer was answered. Their aunt left the mills, went back to the mountains, and married; and the old man, with her influence transferred to the other side, and homesick also for the hills, turned his face toward the Blue Ridge.

The children were happy at getting out of the mills. But on the heart of the sister came more heavily now that other command of their father, that they get an education. For this she began to pray earnestly. Their grandfather at first carried them to a small farm on which was a gristmill he undertook to run. But he failed with that, and went back to his old farm. Now his granddaughter began to besiege him to send them away somewhere to school. In his rather passive objection to this, however, he had now the active assistance of two allies, one his unmarried son, who came to live on the farm, and the other his daughter, that same aunt-of-the-mills, who, now divorced after a brief honeymoon, was also under the paternal roof.

“You ought to be ashamed,” they said to Lucy, “jist when you’re a-growin’ up to be some ’count to your pore old granther, to mewl about a-goin’ off to school. Ain’t



The School They Found

“They prayed and worked their way into the opportunity for an education.”

you been enough care, 'thout askin' him to send you off to git book larnin' an' be no 'count? "

But the hope and the ambition and the sisterly love of that sixteen-year-old girl, prayer-fortified, was proof against brow-beating and abuse, and she kept her determination that her two brothers, left as they were to her care and guidance, should with her have an opportunity to train for better service. She tried to learn of some school where she could find a place for three.

Fifteen miles from her home, at B——, she learned of an orphanage and school, and she determined secretly to get a place there, if possible. One of her aunts lived at a place a few miles above B——, and she obtained permission to visit her, walking all the way. On her way, she stopped at the school and applied for admission. They told her they were pretty full, and did not know that they could take her and her brothers in. But she pleaded with

them until they promised to consider it. Mrs. Armstrong, a lady living near her aunt's, took great interest in her, and promised to see the school people and intercede with them.

Lucy walked home, and waited hopefully for some word. At last it came, from Mrs. Armstrong, but it was only a disappointment,—they could not take her. Worse than that, the letter, when it came, was captured and opened by her aunt, and it was through her that the girl learned of the disappointment.

“What's these tricks you've been up to now?” exclaimed the vigilant guardian, “Been a-sneakin' off to try to git away from your pore old granther. Now git to work, you hussy! You cain't git away no-how: you got a guardeen, you want to know.”

But there was an unexpected result. When grandfather heard of it, he was struck with fear that the children would

clandestinely leave him some day, and perhaps also, father of a worthy son, his heart was touched by some sense of compassion and sympathy for this persistent effort of his grandchildren toward a goal he could not appreciate.

“Ef you children air bound to go, I’ll try to he’p ye. Your old grandpa will he’p ye,” he said.

It was on a cold November morning that he presented himself at our doors to ask a place for his grandchildren. We were just starting a school a few miles above B——. This was the first I had heard of these children, and little enough I heard then from the lips of the old man, only that they were orphans, and wanted to stay together. We counseled with one another as to whether we could take the children, but our circumstances just then made it seem impossible, and so I had to tell the old man. “But,” said I, “I have a friend who is conducting an orphanage, and I will

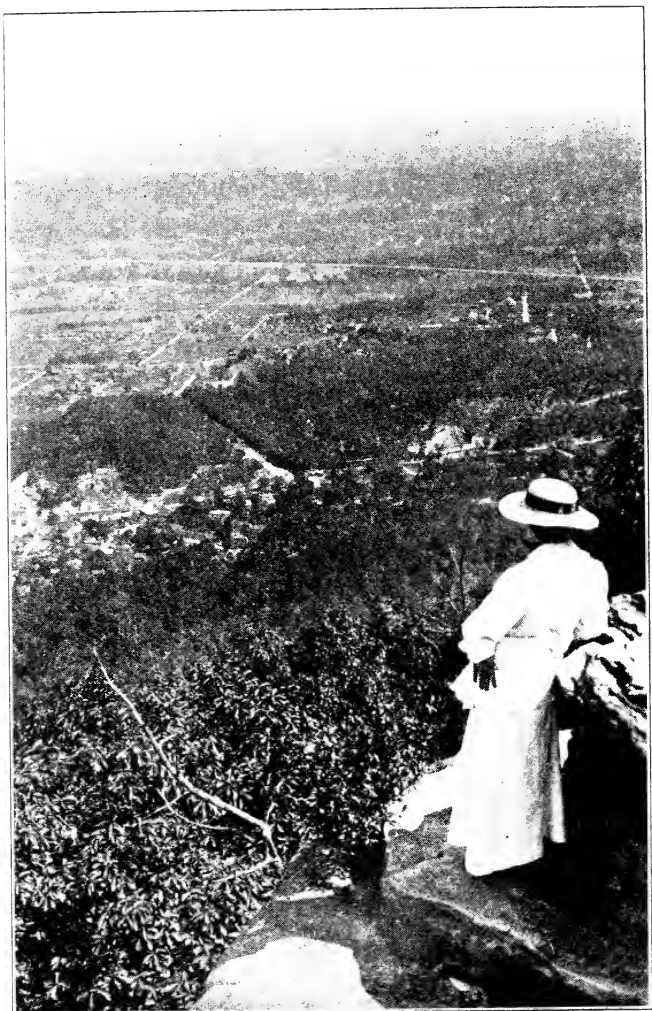
write him to see if they cannot have a place there."

The old man went home, his conscience cleared of his onerous task, and secretly pleased, doubtless, at his failure. He only told the children that there was no place for them, and said nothing about the possible further chance which I had suggested.

"Did you begin to despair," I asked of Lucy long after, "when the way was thus closed up? Did you stop hoping for an education?"

"No," she answered, "for God seemed to say to me, 'Keep on praying. I will help you. There is a place somewhere.'"

And a place somewhere there was. For in a week or two we were able to send them word that the way was open for them to enter school. Mrs. Armstrong herself carried the news down to their home, hunted up a cousin who was a man of property and influence, and stirred him to help get the children off.



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From the Brow of Lookout

"Dear children of the mountains, I pray for you all a deeper knowledge, a broader experience, a fairer success, than you even yet have known."

And thus at last these faithful children of the faithful Jonadab found his faith and theirs rewarded. They had prayed to God in their need; though against their will they had been forced into the mills, they had prayed themselves out; and they had prayed and worked their way into the opportunity for an education. Well might their teacher say of them, from their history as well as from his experience with them, "They are children of the Rechabites."

Bright-faced, blue-eyed, with an ever-ready smile, they were children whom to see was to love. The youngest boy, quick of movement, swift to obey and to help, is a magnet drawing every one. Leonard, sturdy, neat, dependable, energetic, and impatient of delays and obstacles, has had a hard but valuable lesson in the checks of his young life. I found him at the plow, and talked with him of his plans. But though he was cheerily cordial, he had little

to say, and I learned more from his sister of his aspirations than from him. Deep of thought, but reticent, he makes none his confidant but his sister. She, one among a thousand women, does not fall short of that paragon the mother of King Lemuel sought for him:

“A worthy woman who can find?
 For her price is far above rubies. . . .
 She seeketh wool and flax,
 And worketh willingly with her hands. . . .
 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor;
 Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the
 needy. . . .
 She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
 And the law of kindness is on her tongue. . . .
 Many daughters have done worthily,
 But thou excellest them all.”

Dear children of the Rechabites, I wish for you, and for the many like you scattered throughout these mountains — I pray for you all a deeper knowledge, a broader experience, a fairer success, than you even

yet have known; that, like Joseph, upon your heads the blessings of your father may prevail above the blessings of his progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; and that, like the promise of old from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, so throughout eternity, "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me forever."

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